POL5010X

EATING SOUP WITH A KNIFE:

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY & COUNTERINSURGENCY

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PLAIGIRISM DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

Not all militaries are able to learn counterinsurgency. Whether a military has the capacity to do so is determined by very specific factors: a conducive political environment; and pragmatism within the respective military. During the 1970s and 1980s, the South African military exhibited both and learned counterinsurgency to devastating effect. Post 1990, however, the political environment has proven unfavourable for the continuing of that learning by the new South African National Defence Force, and the military no longer practises counterinsurgency to any significant extent. However, problematically, new commitments in peace support operations, in otherwise insurgent conflicts, are giving rise to a need for many of the counterinsurgency skills and tactics discarded during the transition period.

This dissertation examines the learning of counterinsurgency by the South African military during Apartheid, and discusses what has become of that knowledge during the transition to democracy. It is divided into four chapters. The first chapter considers the learning of counterinsurgency by military institutions in general; the second chapter, the learning of counterinsurgency by the South African military; and the third considers the continuing of counterinsurgency by the military after the transition. The fourth chapter, reflects on the importance of learning counterinsurgency, and examines in greater depth the military's reluctance to continue to learn counterinsurgency.

In this, the paper concludes that given new security commitments, it is highly problematic for the military to continue to *not* practise counterinsurgency. That in order for the military to achieve its new strategic objectives and tasks, and the nation its national security goals, the South African military needs to re-activate its learning of counterinsurgency.

"They would believe that rebellion was absolute like war, and deal with it on the analogy of war…war upon rebellion was messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife."

T. E. Lawrence

Seven Pillars of Wisdom

"…they must not attempt to crack the nut, they must only gnaw on the surface and the borders."

Carl von Clausewitz

On War

"The war will be a tedious one, nor can it be glorious, even tho' attended with success. Instead of decisive battles, woodland skirmishes – instead of Colours and Cannons, our Trophies will be stinking scalps."

William Smith as quoted by Francis Parkman

The Conspiracy of Pontiac

"juggernaut *n.* 1. large heavy lorry. 2. any irresistible destructive force."

Collins English Dictionary

CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
ANC	African National Congress
ARMSCOR	Armaments Corporation of South Africa
ASF	African Standby Force
BOSS	Bureau of State Security
CCB	Civil Cooperation Bureau
COIN	counterinsurgency
COMOPS	Communications Operations
DCI	Directorate of Covert Information
DI	Defence Intelligence
DMI	Department of Military Intelligence
DOD	Department of Defence
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DST	Directorate of Special Tasks
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Mozambique
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
JSCD	Joint Standing Committee on Defence
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
MONUC	UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NSMS	National Security Management System
ONUB	UN Operation in Burundi
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
PSO	peace support operations
RENAMO	Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana
SA Army	South African Army
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADCBRIG	Southern African Development Community Standby Force Brigade
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SSC	State Security Council
SWAPO	South West African Peoples' Organization
SWATF	South West African Territory Force
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	Union Defence Force
UN	United Nations
UNITA	União Nacional para a Indepencia Total de Angola
US	United States
WHAM	winning of hearts and minds

INTRODUCTION

Counterinsurgency is notoriously difficult, with many comparing it to both that of an art and a science. Success often proves illusive. A definitive theory and approach, similarly so.[1] However, some militaries fair better than others. A reason for which is a military's capacity to learn and keep COIN knowledge.[2] While many militaries have encounters with insurgency, most struggle to learn COIN, let alone preserve that knowledge for the future. Others, however, do learn and learn well. For these few, the question becomes what they do with that knowledge. The SANDF is one such military.

The purpose of this dissertation is to consider the learning of COIN by the SA military, and what has become of that knowledge after the transition to democracy. To what extent the military has maintained its COIN knowledge gained during the 1970s and 1980s, how it now prepares for COIN, and particularly so given the military's increasing deployments into insurgent conflicts in PSOs.

(i) Learning & Keeping COIN

COIN is the action taken by a government to counter, undermine and eliminate an insurgency. Learning COIN is a difficult task, and success is dependent on fairly specific factors. These factors include a conducive political environment and pragmatism within the military. Historically, a favourable political environment consists of a crisis of legitimacy within a colonial or minority-ruled government, and where this crisis is articulated in terms of insurgency. Pragmatism centres on the reliance of a military on practice over theory in its approach to COIN. This reliance is rooted in knowledge gained through formative COIN experiences; decentralized structures; a limited access to resources; and a culture which values adaptability. Importantly, these factors cannot be simulated, and militaries which have been fortunate enough to acquire COIN knowledge, should keep that knowledge.

The keeping of COIN knowledge is achieved through theory or doctrine, training programmes and elite units which specialize in COIN warfare. In an era defined by insurgency, militaries are empowered by being well-versed in COIN. Continuing to learn COIN entrenches features within a military required by contemporary conflict. Namely, flexibility, adaptability and innovativeness. A military able to conduct COIN is a

[1] Annette Seegers, "If Only…The Ongoing Search for Method in Counter-Insurgency," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 8/9 (1989/1990): 203-224.

[2] That is, their ability to learn valuable COIN knowledge, incorporate and adapt their experience in the development of doctrine, tactical skill and capabilities, and training for future encounters. David A. Charters, "From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations," in *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict. A Comparative Analysis*, eds. David Charters and Maurice Tugwell (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1989).

military able to be effective in a variety of contemporary roles, albeit fighting insurgency or participating in PSOs in insurgent conflicts.

(ii) The SA Military & COIN

South Africa has arguably one of the most infamous COIN histories. Apartheid leaders waged a devastating COIN campaign during the 1970s and 1980s, against several liberation movements, internally and externally, in a rural and urban context. The SADF played a leading role in this campaign, and gained extensive COIN knowledge and experience. Various security forces participated in COIN, however, the military was decisive in shaping South Africa's overall COIN posture.

Exhibiting the factors necessary for acquiring COIN knowledge, the SADF learned COIN during this period. A crisis of legitimacy emerged from 1960 against Apartheid's white-minority rule. Articulated through insurgency, the crisis came to be seen as a *total onslaught* by Apartheid leaders. In response, the military took a pragmatic approach. While theory was developed, a greater emphasis was placed on practice. This sense of practice was rooted in the SADF's formative experiences; its reliance on decentralized elite forces and commando structures; and its having to operate with limited resources, especially human resources. The lack of manpower resulted in the SADF making use of allied and proxy forces to fight the insurgencies both within and beyond South Africa's borders. This approach was further indicative of an institutional culture open to adaptability and flexibility.

Post 1994, the transition has proven to be a precarious environment for the continuing of COIN. The SANDF was born out of the negotiations for a democratic South Africa, and took a staunchly conventional stance in terms of posture, function and design. In light of the overwhelming illegitimacy of the SADF's COIN wars, COIN was relegated to the past and is considered a method of warfare no longer relevant to the military.

However, new security interests and threats have resulted in the SANDF becoming increasingly involved in PSOs in insurgent conflicts. These operations have given rise to needs within the army classically met through COIN training. Yet, pragmatism within the SANDF has been ambiguous. The SANDF continues to struggle with a lack of resources, and several specialist structures continue to practice COIN. However, these structures are on the decline, and the vast majority of members of the army are no longer trained in COIN.

While the needs arising in PSOs and the necessity to meet security policy goals are creating an impetus to refer back to COIN, the future of the military's COIN knowledge remains unclear. The SANDF appears to have lost its pragmatic edge in a political environment essentially still hostile to COIN. Wider policy goals are clear on the need to create greater security and stability in the region. However, the fear of the military becoming the juggernaut it once was, is hindering the development of a conducive political environment to continue COIN within the SANDF.

As such, the keeping of COIN knowledge by the SANDF is in doubt, and COIN as a method of warfare known to the SA military in jeopardy. COIN is to play a central role in the SANDF's future if the military is to aid in attaining current security policy goals and meet its own operational needs. However, should the SANDF continue on its present course, COIN knowledge will be lost forever.

(iii) Method & Outline

The dissertation will be divided into four chapters: the analytical framework; the learning of COIN by the SADF; the keeping of that knowledge by the SANDF; and a final chapter which will consider the case in perspective.

Chapter One will provide a definition of *insurgency* and *counterinsurgency*, and a review of the necessary factors for learning and keeping COIN knowledge. *Chapter Two* will examine the learning of COIN by the SADF between 1975 and the transition, and *Chapter Three* will consider the learning and keeping of that knowledge by the SANDF after 1990. Finally, *Chapter Four* will reflect on the importance of learning and continuing COIN, and the SANDF's reluctance towards COIN.

The thesis takes the form of a conceptual, descriptive case study regarding the learning and keeping of COIN knowledge. Specifically, the analytical framework identifies the factors affecting the learning of COIN, and is illustrated with the case of the SA military. The case was selected due to the military's extensive, multiple experiences with COIN, and its recent institutional transition. The single case method likewise allows for a more in-depth analysis and evaluation of both the case and the concepts presented.

Evidence was collected through a variety of sources. Conceptual information was gathered from secondary sources, and case evidence was collected through both secondary and primary resources. Primary resources included legal and military policy documents, media sources, informal conversations and formal interviews conducted

with military personnel and civilian analysts. These interviews were carried out through a fairly loosely structured, in-depth approach centred around a number of open-ended and key questions. A number of interviews were conducted face-to-face, however, several were telephonic interviews. Also, written and email correspondence was used with the DOD and selected civilian analysts. Importantly, the nature of the subject is one that is largely classified. As such, the paper has relied predominantly on unclassified materials and information provided by military and civilian sources. However, on occasion sources have been left anonymous due to requests based on a need for confidentiality as a result of the sensitive nature of the topic.

Moreover, in terms of learning, this thesis is considering a military institution, and specifically a military institution's learning of COIN. Consequently, it will focus specifically on learning relating to COIN. As mentioned above, various security institutions were significantly engaged in COIN during the 1970s and 1980s, however, the dissertation will only consider that of the military. Within this, the thesis will only consider and refer to the SA Army and the DMI due to their overwhelming prominence in COIN and contemporary peace operations.

Finally, whether practised by democracies or authoritarian regimes, COIN has a tendency to be an innately dirty game, characterized by terror, torture, disappearances, detention without trial, and covert operations. However, with regards to the SADF, it is not the purpose of this dissertation to evaluate the SADF's COIN from a moral position, but rather to describe and analyze their learning of COIN. The emphasis is on establishing the facts regarding this learning, and what of that knowledge remains. Importantly, this dissertation is not considering the transformation of the military. While the paper will briefly discuss the transition as experienced by the military, the paper will not consider the wider difficulties and problems faced by the military post-liberation.

CHAPTER ONE: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Learning COIN is a difficult task for which not all militaries have the capacity. As such, COIN knowledge is invaluable. This chapter will define insurgency and COIN, and consider the factors which lead to a military learning COIN. Broadly, these factors include a conducive political environment and pragmatism. The chapter will likewise note how a military keeps this knowledge.

1.1. KEY CONCEPTS

Insurgency is a form of unconventional warfare, and will be understood to include both rural guerrilla action and urban uprising and rebellion. COIN is the method of fighting used to put down insurgency, and is understood in terms of theory and practice.

1.1.1. Insurgency

Insurgency is a much debated concept. It is best understood broadly as a term used to describe "...an attempt to overthrow or oppose a state or regime by force of arms..."[3] It can be characterized by rural guerrilla action and or urban uprising and rebellion.

Insurgency is an unconventional method of warfare. Conventional war involves the reliance on a central command structure, technology and the use of heavy firepower, and aims to gain control of territory and resources. Unconventional war is the antithesis of this. It is protracted and becomes a war of attrition; uses small, lightly armed, mobile units; and aims to control the loyalties of people.[4] It makes use of irregular tactics: hit-and-run attacks, sabotage and terror. It avoids the enemy's main forces, and attacks from unexpected directions at unexpected times.[5] Its use became known as *guerrilla war* during the early 19th century, meaning *little war*.[6] However, it has endured throughout history, defining wars without clear beginnings and ends, of peoples of pre-states, weak states and failed states. It "...is a highly political act, arising from some grievance or upon the exploitation and manipulation of grievance."[7] Practitioners likewise vary, including those from the extreme left to the extreme right, nationalists, monarchists, separatists and fundamentalists.

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[3] Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion. The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 1.

[4] Insurgency relies heavily on popular support. For example, Lawrence argued for only needing 2% active support from the population, with the rest required merely to be quietly sympathetic. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworths Editions Limited, 1997. First published 1935), 186.

[5] Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies. Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2001), vii; John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 15.

[6] Ian F. W. Beckett and John Pimlott, *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm Ltd, 1985), 1; Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies. Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750*, 1.

[7] Ian F. W. Beckett, "The Future of Insurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 16 (March 2005): 33.

Insurgency is the *weapon of the weak*.[8] *Weak* local forces participate in an asymmetric conflict against an enemy who possesses superior conventional capability in terms of numbers, resources and equipment. The enemy constitutes a national or colonial government, or an occupying force.[9] This asymmetry has historically existed between the enemy and a specific insurgent group. However, more recently, multiple groups operating independently, even against each other, are likewise prominent. Importantly, the insurgents do not have to win, they just have to outlast the enemy, wear down their will to continue fighting, rendering the insurgents victorious by not having lost rather than by winning outright.[10] In insurgency, it is the most committed who wins.

Insurgency can be located in both rural and urban contexts. Historically, the former proved more successful due to insurgents having local support, knowledge of the terrain, greater mobility to carry out attacks, evade capture, and establish base areas from which to wage the insurgency. Urban insurgency has been more easily contained. However, with greater urbanization, this vulnerability has arguably diminished, and particularly when insurgency is waged as a combination of rural and urban action.[11]

Notably, there have been various proponents of insurgent warfare through the ages. During the 20th century, insurgency was adopted by communist revolutionaries who theorized regarding rural guerrilla action and its later application to the urban arena. Of note was Guevara's *foco* concept and Mao's organized model of rural guerrilla warfare, both of which inspired many in anti-colonial struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Mao, for example, advocated a phased, protracted method for revolution: first covert action and political preparation; then hit-and-run tactics and terror; followed by more overt, mobile actions, and finally, conventional warfare.[12] However, despite the relative success of these theories, there never emerged an approach to fit all circumstances.

Nevertheless, the use of insurgent tactics persists. Two prominent contemporary applications include jihad and warlord insurgency.[13] In the case of the latter, insurgency

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[8] Anthony James Joes, *Modern Guerrilla Insurgency* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 5.
[9] Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: the Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* 27 (1975): 175, 178 and 181-182.
[10] Joes, *Resisting Rebellion. The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, 10-11; Mack, 200.
[11] Beckett, "The Future of Insurgency," 24 and 31-32.
[12] See Che Guevara, "Guerrilla Warfare: A Method," (first published 1963), in *Guerrilla Warfare*, by Che Guevara, (London: Souvenir Press, 2003), 142-158; Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith II (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000, first published 1961), 94-114.
[13] For Jihad insurgency, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim. America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 174-175; Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (London: Phoenix, 2002); Jerrold D. Green,

has returned to a method of fighting to achieve power in weak and failed states. Political aims are of a raw, classic nature, and should not be misidentified as criminal. It came to prominence towards the end of the Cold War.[14] As superpower aid was withdrawn, so leaders of various weak states began to lose their grip over the territories they had governed through colonial-styled, indirect rule. Rebel militias emerged from outlying regions where governments had long since been represented. Supported by funds and guns secured through illegal trades, these militia fight remaining government forces and then each other as the state fails. While control of the state is desirable, it is not essential, and some have been satisfied with controlling territories in which they establish their own forms of rudimentary rule.[15] Examples include, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the DRC and Afghanistan.

Therefore, insurgency is enduring, and is used to refer to an armed means by which to overthrow a ruling regime. It includes both rural and urban guerrilla action, by varied participants who fight in an asymmetric conflict against a superior military force.

1.1.2. Counterinsurgency

Counterinsurgency is exactly that, actions taken by government forces to *counter* and eliminate insurgency. However, from the Romans to the present day, COIN poses a formidable task to any military, no matter how well trained, disciplined and supplied.

COIN requires conventional militaries to fight an unconventional war. Designed for traditional battlefields and maximum force, conventional forces are required to apply minimum force with surgical care in populous environments.[16] Conventional tactics, troops and weapons, however superior, do not guarantee victory.[17] The COIN force is perpetually reacting, the initiative forever in the hands of the insurgents. There is no distinguishable enemy and no clear end. As goals fail to be realized, professionalism suffers and COIN disintegrates into a very dirty game, often characterized by the likes

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"Terrorism and Politics in Iran," in *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men. An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003).

[14] See Christopher Clapham, *African Guerrillas* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 1998); Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System. The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999); Stathis N. Kalyvas, "'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars. A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics* 54 (October 2001): 99-118.

[15] These fiefdoms largely coincide with natural resource deposits and trading networks, all of which ensure an indefinite source of funds, and a lack of incentive for formal state-building. Clapham, *African Guerrillas*, 5.

[16] Alistair Finlan, "Warfare by Other Means: Special Forces, Terrorism and Grand Strategy," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 14 (Spring 2003): 94.

[17] Mack, 177-178.

of torture, summary execution and detention without trial. COIN is thus considered to be "...distinctly unglamorous."[18]

COIN is understood in terms of theory and practice. Practice considers the practitioners and their methods. For example, special forces. Special forces constitute light, highly skilled, small units of elite forces trained in unconventional war, and which conduct covert and clandestine operations, including assassination, raids, reconnaissance, and sabotage. Theory pertains to doctrine, the ideas, concepts, informing principles and guidelines for action by COIN practitioners.

COIN theory has come to be divided between three basic approaches. *WHAM* is the most widely accepted, and constitutes a politically-orientated, indirect approach which prioritizes development over security. Emerging in the wake of the British campaign in Malaya, WHAM seeks to isolate the population from insurgent infiltration and propaganda, and to secure their allegiance by meeting their developmental needs.[19] However, support for the insurgency often stems from just opposition, resulting in no amount of reform being sufficient. Problematically, this approach thus assumes that the government is fighting the good fight, and that the population is merely vulnerable to insurgent manipulation. Conversely, the *cost-benefit* approach is coercive, direct and military-focused, and involves the raising of costs to communities via repressive means to discourage support for the insurgency.[20] Having emerged in America during the Vietnam War, it emphasizes security above all else. However, it is criticized for being too forceful, demoralizing for the COIN force, and to have a poor record of success.[21]

The third, *imperial* approach is less obvious in COIN theory, however, is the approach used by those most successful with COIN. From the Romans to the later colonial powers, it involves the COIN force creating enemies for its enemies, using opponents of the insurgents to fight the insurgents, creating insurgency to counter insurgency.

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[18] Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies. Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750*, 25.

[19] D. Michael Shafer, "The Unlearned Lessons of Counterinsurgency," *Political Science Quarterly* 103 (Spring 1988): 62;Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 27. See Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency. Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1974, first published 1966); T. N. Greene, *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him* (New York and London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962); Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operation: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).

[20] Shafer, 73.

[21] The British Army's COIN manual states that it clouds political realities and leads to a military dominated campaign plan "...'that misses the real focus of an insurgency...is conceptually flawed and will not achieve success.'" British Army Code No71596 (Part 2), Army Field Manual, Volume V, *Operations Other Than War*, Section B, *Counter Insurgency Operations*, Part 2, *The Conduct of Counter Insurgency Operations*, 2-1 to 2-2, as quoted in Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 27.

Historically used on the borders of states and empires, this approach allows for the divide and rule of enemies. *Opponents* include both local auxiliary armies and already existing forces (often enemies of the insurgents). Importantly, this approach is used opportunistically as candidate forces present themselves, and out of necessity to meet force requirements. [22]

Thus, COIN is the action taken by a governing power against insurgency. It is inherently difficult, and is understood in terms of theory and practice. Much like insurgency, attempts to universalize theory have failed, with many theories being bound to time and place.[23]

1.1.3. Conclusion

Insurgency is a broad term referring to the use of unconventional warfare in an asymmetric conflict with a conventional force. It manifests as guerrilla action, uprising and rebellion, in rural and urban settings. It is enduring both as a method of fighting and as a bloody conundrum for those who try to fight back. Faced with insurgency, conventional militaries are required to fight unconventionally. However, there exists no definitive theory as to how.

1.2. LEARNING COIN & MILITARY INSTITUTIONS

Acquiring COIN knowledge is determined by a conducive political environment for the learning of COIN by a military, and pragmatism within that military. Once acquired, COIN survives through doctrine, training and elites.

1.2.1. Learning COIN

Learning involves adapting established knowledge to new circumstances, and developing new ideas and methods while guided by prior experiences.[24] A military's institutional capacity for learning COIN depends on a conducive political environment which favours the learning of COIN by the military, and pragmatism within that military. Pragmatism refers to the emphasis a military places on practice over theory: the more

[22] The Romans made use of foreign auxiliaries, local non-Romans who were recruited as the empire expanded. They likewise made use of foreign mercenaries from the late 4th century. While the auxiliaries constituted foreign units led by imperial officers, the mercenary units amounted to *barbarian 'federates'* who served under their own leaders, and fought for Rome as federate allies. As Rome declined so the meeting of force requirements became difficult and increasingly necessitated such alliances. A more recent example includes the British use of loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland. John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 184-185, 275 and 280; Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2005), 191-250.

[23] Seegers, "If Only…The Ongoing Search for Method in Counter-Insurgency," 209-214; Beckett and Pimlott, 8.

[24] Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 6; Christopher C. Harmon, "Illustration of 'Learning' in Counterinsurgency," *Comparative Strategy* 11 (1992), 44.

emphasis placed on practice, the more effectively a military will learn. An emphasis on practice is rooted in a reliance on knowledge gained during previous encounters with COIN. This knowledge is acquired through a military's historical need to adapt as part of its formative experiences, and given its structure, access to resources, and culture. If a military is too rigid in its application of theory and or there is an unfavourable political environment, a military will struggle to learn.

1.2.1.1. Political Environment

A conducive political environment for learning COIN constitutes a crisis of legitimacy in which insurgency is waged in resistance to the standing political order, bringing into question its legitimacy to rule. This crisis has emerged in colonial, colonial-type or minority-ruled settings.

In colonial struggles, the political remained supreme. Soldiers were charged with the implementation of political objectives. For example, the British Army was charged with assisting a colonial administration to maintain control over a large population with a relatively small number of soldiers.[25] The conflict itself remains limited for the colonial forces, who withdraw when the costs become too high. While the COIN force initially fights hard to put down the insurgency, they are ultimately prepared to negotiate the future of the territory. However, in minority-ruled territories, the territory is non-negotiable. The COIN force continues to fight hard, with what usually begins as a peripheral activity turning into a fight to the death.[26]

In contrast, a political environment not conducive to learning COIN is a containment struggle. This is typical of US actions during the Cold War and its War on Terror. In this context, COIN is governed by a need to contain a designated threat to national survival. Threats are understood to be rooted in subversion by insidious elements interfering in the domestic situations of allies, and local discontent is dismissed as merely products of coercion by these elements.[27] War is likewise considered to be the domain of the military. The military has a great deal of control over strategies and policies, and "...once war is initiated, the military assumes primacy over politics".[28]

A conducive political environment is thus a crisis of legitimacy in a colonial or minority-ruled setting, in which resistance is executed through insurgency, and militaries implement political objectives.

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[25] Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 38.
[26] For example, the conflict in Northern Ireland, South Africa, former Rhodesia, and Israel/Palestine.
[27] Shafer, 58-59.
[28] Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 43.

1.2.1.2. Pragmatism

How pragmatic a military is will determine whether it learns COIN or not. A military which is pragmatic, emphasizes practice rather than theory. This practice is defined by *adaptability*, the incorporation of skills gained and the development of new skills to better address insurgency.[29]

1.2.1.2.1. Theory

The implementation of doctrine is indicative of a military's pragmatism. The more rigidly a military adheres to doctrine, the less pragmatic the institution. Instead, COIN doctrine works best when applied selectively in consideration of specific local circumstances.

The British Army has arguably the best record with COIN of all armed forces. For the better part of its history there existed no set body of doctrine. Rather, soldiers had to adapt.[30] Instead of a venerated manual, experience was passed down from man to man, with soldiers having to draw on personal experience and that of their colleagues.[31] Even once doctrine was codified in the late 20th century, it continued to be understood as merely a *basis for thought*.[32] Moreover, that "...theoretical understanding of the nature of a particular conflict is insufficient by itself; 'models' do not fit perfectly because the circumstances of each conflict are different."[33] Key to British success then, has been their flexible and uneven application of doctrine rather than any doctrinal adherence.[34]

In contrast, the US military's approach to doctrine has been rigid and inflexible. Its preference for conventional big-war theory and fixed application thereof has prevented the emergence of tactical operations aimed at the essence of insurgency, and impeded its ability to incorporate lessons from COIN.[35] It has further attempted to universalize the application of theory and reduce the significance of local political situations. In this, doctrine has served to obscure rather than provide guidance in how to fight COIN.[36]

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[29] Charters.
[30] Ibid., 179-182.
[31] Harmon, 33 and 36.
[32] Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 7.
[33] Charters, 194.
[34] Beckett and Pimlott, 3.
[35] Robert M. Cassidy, "Winning the War of the Flea. Lessons from Guerrilla Warfare," *Military Review* 84 (September/October 2004): 41; Sam C. Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era. Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1993), 10; Sam C. Sarkesian, "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict: the Formative Period," in *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict. A Comparative Analysis*, eds. David Charters and Maurice Tugwell (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1989), 42.
[36] Shafer, 57 and 76-77

Therefore, a pragmatic military applies theory selectively and according to the specific circumstances of a specific conflict. Instead, an unpragmatic military is rigid in its application and attempts to universalize theory.

1.2.1.2.2. Practice

Relying on practice involves relying on experience gained and a willingness to adapt to new things. Knowledge gained in prior encounters with COIN is rooted in a military's formative experiences, structure, access to resources, and culture.

1.2.1.2.2.1. Formative Experiences

Formative experiences are the first or primary experiences of a military which determine and shape a military's way of war. In this, a military's first impressions are definitive impressions, and the last war that a military remembers defines how it fights.

A tradition of flexibility is rooted in the British Army's extensive colonial experience, in which it engaged in colonial policing, and countered numerous revolts and uprisings. The continual challenges, varied threats, and diverse geographical conditions necessitated "...a constant need to adapt responses to fit local circumstances..."[37] Through this *a series of responses* emerged and were adapted to fit specific circumstances.[38] Of note is Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency*. Writing in the wake of Malaya, Thompson outlined a need for a combined political and military response, and emphasized the need for intelligence, the use of elite units and minimum force.[39] Malaya was deeply significant in informing British thinking and methods. The army subsequently makes use of special forces and minimum force, aims to establish a clear political directive, constantly revises tactics, and emphasizes the need to adjust tactics to specific conditions.[40] However, whereas others look to Malaya as the fundamental how-to approach, the British themselves have applied it selectively.[41]

In contrast, the US has had a fairly dissimilar history. Prior to Vietnam, the military had a relatively positive history with COIN in the Philippine insurgency. However, this

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[37] John Pimlott, "The British Army: The Dhofar Campaign, 1970-1975," in *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency*, eds. Ian F.W. Beckett and John Pimlott (London and Sydney: Croom Helm Ltd, 1985), 19.
[38] Ibid., 19-20.
[39] Specifically, Thompson outlined 5 basic principles: the government must have a clear political aim to defeat the insurgency; the security forces must function within the law; the roles of *all* agencies must be defined and coordinated; priority must be given to defeating political subversion; and the government must secure territory and win over the inhabitants before carrying out actions against the guerrillas. Thompson, 50-62; Ian F. W. Beckett, "Guerrilla Warfare: Insurgency and Counter-insurgency Since 1945," in *Warfare in the Twentieth Century. Theory and Practice*, eds. Colin McInnes and G. D. Sheffield (London: Hyman, 1988), 208.
[40] Charters, 202.
[41] Beckett and Pimlott, 6.

experience was never regarded as the core business of the military. Instead the Civil War and World Wars defined the American way of war as *absolute war*, involving large numbers of men and material, firepower and direct action to annihilate the enemy.[42] Failure in Vietnam resulted in the COIN experience being considered an anathema to the military's core conventional function, and any knowledge gained was not incorporated into the military's institutional memory.[43] In this, the military has a singularly short institutional memory in which formative ideas were set and have subsequently failed to change.[44]

As such, formative experiences define how a military wages war. If a military's formative experiences encouraged flexibility and adaptability, the military will be well-suited to learning COIN. Or rather, if the military has been bred on countering uprisings and insurgencies, it will be well versed in features and capabilities required to do so.

1.2.1.2.2.2. Structure

COIN favours decentralized command and control structures. These foster flexibility and innovativeness, and allow for lower ranking officers to be decisive without referring back to a central command. Importantly, insurgency is *a junior commander's war.*[45]

The regimental system by which the British Army has traditionally been structured favoured involvement in insurgent conflict. This system amounts to a highly decentralized structure, which has necessitated better training, discipline and unit cohesion among soldiers stationed for long periods of time in alien locations.[46] Varied experiences were fostered among different regiments, and in turn a sense of uniqueness. Regiment histories were likewise glorified in museums and member associations, engendering exclusive group identity and loyalty. Combined with deployments in far-flung places, the system further allowed for a fair amount of latitude among commanders in terms of strategy. It cultivated innovativeness and better quality leadership among officers at a lower level of responsibility, encouraging officers to take the initiative and be decisive in potentially explosive situations.

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[42] Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 44-50.
[43] Cassidy, 41-42.
[44] Sarkesian, "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict: the Formative Period," 40 and 43-45.
[45] George Kruys, "Twentieth Century Classical Insurgency, Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terror," in "Contemporary Terrorism and Insurgency: Selected Case Studies and Responses," *Institute for Strategic Studies Ad Hoc Publication No 42*, Michael Hough, George Kruys and Anton du Plessis (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, November 2005), 19.
[46] The infantry was organized into units (regiments) of paired battalions, the aim of which was to provide a permanent force for duty overseas and a homeland rotational reserve that was recruited on a territorial or regional basis. Charters, 177-178.

The US Army experience saw the development of an opposite type of structure, one based on central command, and characterized by large battalions of infantry supported by extensive quantities of artillery and close air support.[47] This system requires officers to refer back to a central command for a decision, and is best used in a conventional battle in which action must be coordinated. However, it is most unsuitable for COIN in which relatively low-ranking soldiers are required to make split-second decisions without being able to contact central command.

Therefore, decentralized command and control structures suit COIN best. A decentralized system necessitates better training at a lower level of responsibility, and for lower ranking officers to be decisive relatively independent of a central command.

1.2.1.2.2.3. Resources

Learning COIN depends on circumstances characterized by limited resources necessitating innovativeness, adaptability and the use of local forces.

Imperial responsibilities resulted in the British Army being spread thinly on the ground, and being forced to make do with a limited number of resources in comparison to the vast territories which they commanded. In turn, the army took a low-profile response to revolt, "...using their forces sparingly and searching for solutions which did not necessitate large expenditure of men or materiel..."[48] These conditions generated innovation and improvisation as key features of the organization, cooperation with local authorities, and the recruiting of local peoples to increase manpower. The British thus used the imperial approach, and made use of local forces as part of COIN. From India to Northern Ireland, these forces were invaluable in terms of their knowledge of the territory, peoples and "...the nature of the particular rebellion they faced."[49]

Thus, having to make do with few resources fosters flexibility and innovativeness. More significantly though, it encourages the use of the imperial approach to COIN, and as part of which, the use of local peoples to aid in countering insurgency.

[47] Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 48.
[48] Pimlott, 19.
[49] Joes, *Resisting Rebellion. The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, 221.

1.2.1.2.2.4. Culture

Learning is determined by a military's culture, the attitudes, values and beliefs which shape a military's understanding of when and how force is used.[50] A military will learn COIN if it has a culture open to doing so. Such a culture values adaptability.

Culture determines how military institutions react. Not all militaries respond in the same way to the same challenge as they do not share the same mixture and types of ideas, values and attitudes.[51] A military's culture establishes a *way* of doing things, and limits actions in terms of it endorsing certain types of action and prohibiting others.[52] How a military reacts and behaves is then accounted for in its cultural characteristics.

Culture likewise determines whether a military is able to adapt doctrine to meet changes in its operational environment. This adaptation occurs only when institutional leaders agree that it is within the institution's long-term interests to do so.[53] In turn, how past experiences are remembered by leaders is key in understanding *how* militaries adapt to changes in their environment. How militaries perceive themselves, their role and mission further determines how they prepare for both peace and war, as well as how flexible they are in responding to unexpected situations when that war occurs.[54]

As such, the British Army's culture allowed it to learn COIN effectively in Malaya. Its varied past characterized by flexibility in thought and action, created a culture open to the changes required to defeat a complex enemy in a new kind of war.[55] In contrast, the US Army in Vietnam was unable to adapt both during and after the war. While failures were recognized and solutions suggested, they were rejected due to their not conforming to the army's understanding of how wars were to be fought.[56]

Therefore, whether militaries learn COIN or not is determined by their culture. If adaptability and innovation guided by past experiences is valued, if it is in their nature or the way they do things, a military will adapt successfully to COIN requirements.

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[50] Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine. France between the Wars," *International Security* 19 (Spring 1995): 69-70; Cassidy, 41.
[51] Kier, 66 and 70.
[52] Ibid., 78.
[53] John A. Nagl, "Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife. British and American Army Counterinsurgency Learning During the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War," *World Affairs* 161 (Spring 1999): 193, 195 and 197.
[54] Ibid., 196.
[55] Ibid., 193 and 195.
[56] Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 198.

1.2.2. Continuing COIN

Being able to learn COIN is dependent on fairly specific factors which cannot be replicated. Therefore, once a military has acquired COIN, it needs to keep and continue to develop it. This continuing of COIN is accomplished through theory, specialists and training programmes. Military tasks likewise tend to remain the same, and in a world dominated by insurgent conflict, a good knowledge of COIN is an invaluable resource by which to meet the demands of likely conflict environments.

Knowledge from past experiences is captured within routines. Routines are passed on through socialization and education, conserving knowledge despite the turnover of personnel and the passage of time.[57] Routines are recorded in a body of knowledge about how to perform tasks. These bodies can endure and be lost. One means by which they endure is in doctrine.[58] Theory is doctrine, a guide to action and ideas of a military with regards to a specific task. While COIN theory may be best applied selectively, doctrine amounts to a body of knowledge by which concepts and guidelines can be recorded, revised and passed on to new members.

Training further provides the opportunity to pass on the learning experience, foster a value of adaptability, and prepare a wide number of troops in COIN skills, which can then be applied in other settings. However, COIN knowledge is best kept within the structures that specialize in these tactics and methods, namely, the special forces units comprised of essentially irregular soldiers, whose primary features are adaptability, flexibility and innovativeness. Their core business is unconventional warfare, and as elites they constitute the key means by which to fight insurgency.

Importantly, military tasks tend to remain the same in terms of the nature of those tasks, and regardless of time and the durability of bodies of knowledge. Continuing to learn COIN aids in entrenching institutional features such as innovativeness and flexibility, and allows a military to better overcome the weaknesses inherent to COIN. Through learning about the various approaches and their flaws, a military can better train for scenarios; familiarize itself with appropriate equipment; and improve suitable command and control structures.

Insurgency is likewise the most predominant form of conflict in the world today. However, relatively few insurgencies are being addressed through direct COIN. Rather

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[57] Barbara Levitt and James G. March, "Organizational Learning," *Annual Review of Sociology* 14 (1988): 319 and 328.
[58] Ibid., 327; Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, 6-8.

they are being tackled through PSOs. Considered an outdated term, COIN is now conducted under the auspices of MOOTW, and provides an essential framework for PSO doctrine in terms of operational concepts, tactics, skills and methods.[59] In a time in which PSOs are considered to be of ever greater importance as functions of militaries,[60] and increasingly "...look very much like traditional counterinsurgency,"[61] COIN knowledge helps a military be both more effective in insurgency, as well as in PSOs in insurgent conflicts.

Thus COIN knowledge is best kept through theory, COIN training programmes and specialist structures which continue to practise COIN. Being that military tasks tend to remain the same, and the overwhelming prevalence of insurgency, continuing COIN is very much so relevant for meeting the needs of contemporary conflict environments, albeit direct COIN operations or PSOs in insurgent conflicts.

1.2.3. Conclusion

A military's capacity to learn COIN is determined by the existence of a conducive political environment and pragmatism within a military. A favourable environment amounts to a crisis of legitimacy within a colonial or minority-rule setting, and in which the crisis is articulated through insurgency. A pragmatic military is one which relies on practice over theory. While there is a place for theory in COIN, it must be applied rather than followed. A reliance on practice is founded in knowledge gained through formative experiences in which a military's way of war is defined by insurgency; decentralized command and control structures; limited resources; and a culture which values adaptability. All of which foster flexibility and innovativeness in the face of far-flung, foreign deployments. COIN knowledge is then conserved through theory, continued training and elite units which specialize in COIN.

1.3. CONCLUSION

Insurgency is the use of irregular methods and tactics in an asymmetric conflict with a superior military force, in rural and urban settings. It is aimed at overthrowing a ruling power, and is characterized by rural guerrilla action, urban uprising and rebellion, or

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[59] Major David Strawbridge (British Peace Support Training Team), conversation with author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005; Henri Boshoff, interview by author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005; United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, Joint Warfare Publication 3-50, *The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations*, 2nd ed. (UK, June 2004), (A11) – (A17).

[60] Rocklyn Williams, "How Primary is the Primary Function? Configuring the SANDF for Africana Realities," *African Security Review* 8 (1999): http://www.iss.org.za/Pubs/ASR/8No6/HowPrimary.html ; Theo Neethling, "Military Forces and Non-Traditional Military Roles: Assessing Post-Cold War Developments and Considering Some Implications for the SANDF," *Journal for Contemporary History* 27 (April 2002): 1.

[61] Joes, *Resisting Rebellion. The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, 5.

both. It is enduring as a method of warfare, and especially where state systems remain underdeveloped.[62] COIN is the method of fighting used to put down and eliminate insurgency. It can be understood in terms of theory and practice. Practice refers to the practitioners of COIN, their methods, tactics and techniques; and theory to the ideas, principles, goals and guidelines informing these practitioners.

Learning COIN warfare, however, is no straightforward task. Whether a military has the capacity to do so is determined by the presence of a conducive political environment and pragmatism within the respective military. Historically, a favourable political environment is a crisis of legitimacy struggle in a colonial or minority-rule setting. Pragmatism is a reliance on practice over theory. In this, theory or doctrine is applied selectively given the particular circumstances of a particular conflict. Practice relies on knowledge gained during a military's formative experiences and as a result of its structure, access to resources and culture. More specifically, a military will learn COIN through formative institutional experiences against insurgency; decentralized structures; a limited access to resources; and a culture which values adaptability.

Once learned, COIN knowledge is conserved through theory, training programmes, and specialists in COIN warfare. Importantly, military tasks tend to remain the same, and in a world dominated by insurgent conflict, it is within the long-term interests of a military which has been able to learn COIN, to continue to do so. Moreover, given the nature of contemporary conflict, COIN knowledge likewise provides essential skills to meet the demands of conflict environments in which modern militaries are increasingly likely to find themselves.

Therefore, COIN knowledge is a rare resource which not all have been able to acquire. While learning COIN does not guarantee successful COIN experiences, a military which has learned COIN in the past has an added resource on which it can draw when facing insurgency in the present. A military which continues to learn COIN, is a military which is flexible and innovative, can survive on limited resources in faraway places, and can adapt to new and different insurgent challenges.

[62] Beckett, "The Future of Insurgency," 23.

CHAPTER TWO: THE SADF: LEARNING COIN

Favourable conditions for learning COIN existed in the burgeoning crisis of legitimacy faced by Apartheid rule, and the pragmatic approach taken by the military in addressing the crisis. For twenty years, the SADF remained distinctly unintellectual in its approach, and learned COIN against several, simultaneous insurgencies. This chapter will consider this learning of COIN by the SA military. It will first explore the favourable political environment in which the SADF learned COIN, followed by the military's pragmatism towards COIN in its reliance on practice over theory.

2.1. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT: ONSLAUGHT

From the 1960s, the white minority regime was challenged by insurgency both internally and externally. A crisis of legitimacy took hold from 1960, when armed resistance was declared by the ANC in South Africa, in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre. Resistance likewise emerged in then occupied South West Africa (Namibia), and was led by SWAPO. Resistance took the shape of insurgency, including both rural guerrilla warfare and urban uprising. The ANC and SWAPO were further assisted by independent neighbouring *frontline* states. With the independence of Mozambique and Angola in the mid-1970s, the crisis came to be seen as a *total onslaught* by the regime, and the military a means by which to counter it. Thus, the political environment was set for the SA military to learn COIN.

2.1.1. Insurgency & COIN

2.1.1.1. Pre 1974

The SADF fought both internal and external, urban and rural insurgency. Given the scope of the military, guerrilla tactics were the only option for an armed struggle.[63]

2.1.1.1.1. Namibia

South Africa occupied Namibia since the end of World War II. This occupation had since been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice, however, South Africa had refused to withdraw. As such, Namibia resembled an anti-colonial struggle.

SWAPO waged a more classic guerrilla war, and primarily within the border areas of Kaokoland, Kavango, Caprivi and Ovambo. It was an essentially rural insurgency with

[63] Abiodun Alao, "A Comparative Evaluation of the Armed Struggle in Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8 (Winter 1996): 64.

bases across borders in neighbouring states, over which small units of insurgents were infiltrated, and made use of hit-and-run tactics, sabotage and assassination.[64]

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, COIN was the responsibility of the SAP. However, from 1972, the SADF became involved after a state of emergency had been declared in Ovambo following a series of strikes in 1971 and 1972.[65] By 1973, the SADF had replaced the SAP on the border (Operational Zone) between Namibia and Angola. This placement, out of sight on the far-flung northern border of Namibia was ideal for learning COIN.

As such, the conditions in Namibia were tailor-made for learning COIN: a classic rural insurgency in a remote territory, against a colonial-type regime.

2.1.1.1.2. South Africa

The South African insurgency faced many difficulties from the start. While initially uninvolved, the SADF became progressively more prominent in COIN from the 1970s.

In 1961, the ANC established MK, and conducted sabotage attacks against economic targets.[66] However, a police raid on MK headquarters on 11 July 1963, resulted in the arrest of virtually the entire internal leadership.[67] With leaders either in prison or exile, military action remained limited. The struggle became defined by attempts to develop underground structures, train insurgents, but with little opportunity to carry out operations. Then, in 1969, a new strategy was adopted, and called for a protracted armed struggle requiring mass political mobilization.[68] Influenced by Mao, the strategy emphasized the countryside as the primary theatre of insurgency.[69] However, while the ANC conducted rural action from beyond the borders of the country, their struggle was

[64] William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras. An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (London: Zed Books, 1994), 116; Susan Brown, "Diplomacy by Other Means. SWAPO's Liberation War," in *Namibia's Liberation Struggle. The Two-Edged Sword*, (eds.) Colin Leys and John S. Saul (London: James Currey Ltd, 1995), 21.
[65] Annette Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1996), 138.
[66] Rocky Williams, "The Other Armies: Writing the History of MK," in *The Long March. The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa*, (eds.) Ian Liebenberg, Fiona Lortan, Bobby Nel and Gert van der Westhuizen (Pretoria: HAUM, 1994), 25; Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa Report, "National Overview," *Volume 2* (Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd, 1998), (35).
[67] Williams, "The Other Armies: Writing the History of MK," 26; Francis Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa/Namibia Since 1966," in *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency*, (eds.) Ian F. W. Beckett and John Pimlott. (London and Sydney: Croom Helm Ltd, 1985), 196.
[68] The *Strategy and Tactics of the ANC*. TRC of South Africa Report, "National Overview," (79).
[69] Kevin O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress/South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy 1961-1990," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 14 (Summer 2003), 30-32.

fraught with problems. Namely, an urbanized society, with few rural areas that could in fact sustain insurgency.[70]

As in Namibia, the police were charged with addressing the crisis, and initially the military maintained a low profile in terms of the insurgency.[71] However, as threats expanded from the late 1960s, and the SAP failed to make headway in eliminating the insurgency, the government increasingly turned to the military.

Thus, the insurgency struggled in it early years due to a lack of leadership and unfavourable conditions for rural insurgency. While initially uninvolved, the SADF progressively replaced the SAP as the forerunning institution in addressing the crisis.

2.1.1.1.3. Frontlines

Prior to 1974, South Africa existed in a neighbourhood of white minority-rule. Angola and Mozambique were under Portuguese control, and Rhodesia under the settler regime of Ian Smith. Insurgencies against these regimes were underway by the late 1960s, and both SWAPO and the ANC were in contact with these movements.

The buffer of settler states over-extended infiltration and communication between internal insurgents and those in exile. The ANC responded by supporting regional insurgencies.[72] In return, MK was permitted to use these states to train guerrillas and launch operations. Of note was their support of Zimbabwean insurgents.[73]

Pariahs in their own right, Apartheid found allies in the Portuguese and Smith regimes. Their alliance dominated the region, and Pretoria aided in countering regional insurgency. The SAP were sent to Rhodesia from 1967, and along with later army units, gained extensive COIN experience with the Rhodesian security forces.[74]

As regional insurgency intensified during the 1970s, so did Pretoria's involvement. Consequently, assistance between regional insurgents and those confronting Apartheid resulted in South African forces acquiring diverse, regional COIN experience.

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[70] Minter, 116.
[71] Kenneth W. Grundy, *The Militarization of South African Politics* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1986), 9.
[72] O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress/South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy 1961-1990," 37.
[73] Gavin Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine* (London: International Defence & Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1986), 18; See Thula Bopela and Daluxolo Luthuli, *Umkhonto we Sizwe. Fighting For A Divided People* (South Africa: Galago, 2005).
[74] Including the Selous Scouts and various military units.

2.1.1.2. Post 1974

In 1974, a military coup occurred in Portugal. The Portuguese withdrew from Angola and Mozambique, giving SWAPO and MK direct access to Namibia and South Africa. From a relatively peripheral activity, COIN now became a fight to the death.

2.1.1.2.1. Namibia

Angolan independence reinvigorated the Namibian insurgency. SWAPO and its armed wing PLAN were able to better infiltrate across the border. Occupation continued, and operations against SWAPO bases in Angola were launched from the Operational Zone.

SWAPO was granted permission by the MPLA to establish training bases in Angola. Insurgents were now able to infiltrate across 1376 km of border, and to do so into densely populated areas.[75] Command centres and training camps were established, and popular support cemented.[76] From 1979, PLAN moved into a new phase, conducting strikes on infrastructure, economic and communication targets; and attempting to expand operations deeper into the country.

However, intensified COIN in Namibia, and support for UNITA to counter SWAPO and overthrow the MPLA, began making infiltration difficult. Bases became insecure and lines of supply were disrupted. As the SADF began moving towards conventional war, so PLAN likewise began moving from using small mobile units, to more conventional tactics and structures.[77] By the late 1980s, the focus of the war had moved to the more conventional conflict between South Africa and UNITA, and PLAN, the MPLA and the Cubans in the border region and southern Angola.

After the independence of Angola, the parameters of the Namibian insurgency changed and progressed. COIN by the SADF spilled over into Angola, and the conflict moved towards more mobile and conventional war.

2.1.1.2.2. South Africa

2.1.1.2.2.1. 1974 – 1983

The independence of the Portuguese colonies and the Soweto riots in 1976 altered the dimensions of the South African conflict and radicalized the participants.

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[75] TRC of South Africa Report, "National Overview," (87); Minter, 114.
[76] Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid. The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1992), 89.Brown, 26-27.
[77] Brown, 31.

The independence of Angola and Mozambique allowed the ANC to establish bases within the borders of these countries, with FRELIMO providing MK transit to South Africa.[78] A variety of training programmes were initiated in camps in Angola, and by 1977 MK began infiltrating into the country.[79] However, for the state, decolonization brought its defence line to its borders, and Pretoria became convinced that the state was being subjected to a communist *total onslaught*.[80]

Then, in June 1976, school children in Soweto rioted against the government's attempt to impose Afrikaans as the language of instruction in schools. The riots spread across the country. Many of those who participated were radicalized and left the country to join the likes of MK. The riots were simultaneously the most serious challenge to the state since Sharpeville, and the fear of these individuals returning to overthrow the state, radicalized Pretoria's response. This radicalization became synonymous with militarization as the SADF began to dominate policy.[81]

From 1978, the ANC guerrilla strategy was altered to include urban action and the urban working class.[82] MK stepped-up its urban bombing campaign, with acts becoming both more frequent and high-profile.[83] However, the ANC did not have a stable external base. Communication and supply routes were dispersed; the ability to establish internal bases and carry out meaningful, internal operations was restricted; and in turn, so was the ability to move the struggle to full-scale guerrilla war.[84]

Nevertheless, Pretoria thoroughly believed that the ANC was moving towards the revolutionary overthrow of the state. As a result, the NSMS was created to govern the war, and meet the need for coordinated action.[85] The NSMS became fully operational

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[78] TRC of South Africa Report, "National Overview," (84).
[79] Williams, "The Other Armies: Writing the History of MK," 28.
[80] South African National Defence Force Nodal Point, *Submission IRO the Former SADF* (South Africa: SANDF, 1996), 5; Kevin O'Brien, "Special Forces for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare: The South African Case," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 12 (Summer 2001): 83; Cawthra, 29-31.
[81] Stephen Ellis, "The Historical Significance of South Africa's Third Force," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24 (June 1998): 266.
[82] TRC of South Africa Report, "National Overview," (112)-(113).
[83] Minter, 116. For example: police stations throughout the country; the SASOL coal-oil refinery in June 1981; the Koeberg nuclear station in December 1982; a rocket attack on the SADF's Voortrekkerhoogte military complex in August 1981; and a car bomb outside the South African Air Force's headquarters in May 1983.
[84] O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress/South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy 1961-1990," 40; Williams, "The Other Armies: Writing the History of MK," 29-30; Minter, 116.
[85] South African National Defence Force Nodal Point, 11.

in 1979. It was dominated by military, intelligence and police personnel, and took over the formulation and execution of policy.[86]

Therefore, the period following the independence of Angola and Mozambique saw an escalation of violence by both the insurgents and the state, and a further radicalization all participants in the wake of the 1976 riots.

2.1.1.2.2.2. 1983 – 1990

1983-1990 was characterized by a general offensive aimed at making South Africa ungovernable, with attacks being more spontaneous and arising out of mass resistance rather than organized guerrilla action.[87] Urban revolt ensued as rolling mass action aimed to make Apartheid unworkable through protests, strikes and boycotts.

Despite uprisings across the country and greater internal organization during the mid-1980s, the 1986 State of Emergency suffocated ANC internal structures. Progress was further hindered by the reluctance of neighbouring states to continue to provide refuge. Most significant was Mozambique. As a primary infiltration route, the move severely restricted MK's ability to conduct operations.[88] By the late 1980s, the leadership began moving towards the conclusion that a settlement would have to be sought.[89] This was furthered by the impact of the end of the war in Angola, and the reduction in support from the communist world as the Cold War unravelled. Therefore, the ANC did not succeed in toppling the state militarily. Despite their successes, MK remained an army-in-exile. It largely failed to gain control over any part of the South African territory, and perpetrated operations overwhelmingly from outside of the country.[90]

Nevertheless, in 1985-86 *total onslaught* was replaced by *revolutionary onslaught*, reflecting the belief that the ANC had moved into the mobile war stage of its

[86] The security institutions had been brought together in the SSC in 1972, which was to be a central body by which policy was determined and implementation coordinated. However, by the mid-late 1970s, the SSC had thus far failed to promote departmental coordination. As a result the NSMS was created. Nevertheless, the SSC remained at the core of the NSMS and amounted to an inner cabinet chaired by the State President. Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 32 and 49. Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 165; Chris Alden, *Apartheid's Last Stand. The Rise and Fall of the South African Security State* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996),72.

[87] See Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 217-218.

[88] Howard Barrell, "The Outlawed Liberation Movements," in *South Africa: No Turning Back*, (ed.) Shaun Johnson (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1988), 60. The ANC were also expelled from Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland.

[89] O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress/South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy 1961-1990," 54-55.

[90] Williams, "The Other Armies: Writing the History of MK," 30; Mark Shaw, "Biting the Bullet. Negotiating Democracy's Defence," in *The Small Miracle. South Africa's Negotiated Settlement*, (eds.) Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (Johannesburg: Ravan Press (Pty) Ltd, 1994), 231.

revolutionary war. The State of Emergency further allowed for the security services to gain the initiative by 1987.[91] However, simultaneously, mass action began to generate a political and economic crisis for white power from within its own constituency. The war in Namibia had become too costly. As a result, prominent white businessmen and academics visited ANC leaders in exile, and the NIS began secret talks with the ANC.[92]

The state's domestic and regional activities prevented MK from developing into a serious military threat. ANC attempts to wage insurgency never attained the likes of those in Zimbabwe or Namibia.[93] However, the state was neither victorious, and was toppled by mass action and the economic, political and human costs of COIN.

2.1.1.2.3. Frontlines

The decolonization of regional states fundamentally altered Pretoria's strategic position. The primary concern became the perceived growth of the Soviet-inspired threat (*rooi gevaar*) and the need to prevent infiltrations.

Apartheid leaders aimed to discourage neighbouring states from providing insurgents refuge via trade and aid incentives.[94] However, when this failed, Pretoria launched a campaign involving sabotage, raids, assassination, and the supporting of dissident forces.[95] For example, the SADF had continued to support the Rhodesian forces until late 1979. On independence, South African forces absorbed thousands of Rhodesian personnel. Many of whom were assigned to special forces units and then infiltrated back into Zimbabwe to conduct destabilization operations.

Despite denying it, Pretoria followed a relentless policy of *destructive engagement* towards its neighbours.[96] However, while all neighbouring states were subjected to destabilization, "...ideology and geography made Angola and Mozambique special

[91] Ellis and Sechaba, 173-174; TRC of South Africa Report, "National Overview," (164).
[92] See Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow is Another Country. The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Settlement* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2003, first published 1995).
[93] Minter, 112.
[94] Phyllis Johnson and David Martin, *Frontline Southern Africa. Destructive Engagement* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1988), 21-22; Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 140-141.
[95] The SADF likewise established the Lesotho Liberation Army to destabilize Lesotho, and trained individuals to conduct destabilizing activities in the likes of Botswana and Zambia. Johnson and Martin, xxi; Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 139-140 and 168-169.
[96] Johnson and Martin, xxxiii; "*...the word 'destabilization' is the term of abuse that is being used most against South Africa...*" Magnus Malan, Minister of Defence, *Debates of the House of Assembly* (South Africa: Friday 20 May 1983), col. 7535. Of course, three days later the SADF bombed six ANC *targets* in Maputo. It was claimed that a Mozambican missile site had been affording protection to ANC bases. It was likewise *neutralized*. Magnus Malan, Minister of Defence, *Debates of the House of Assembly* (South Africa: Monday 23 May 1983), col. 7606.

targets."[97] Angola was kept as unstable as possible through support for UNITA, and operations against Angolan infrastructure to force the MPLA to stop supporting SWAPO.[98] Also, being that the two countries provided alternate routes to the coast for countries in the interior, attacking Angolan and Mozambican infrastructure ensured that Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland remained dependent on South African ports.[99]

Destabilization was initially carried out relatively indiscriminately, however, by 1982, Pretoria became more selective in its targets.[100] This policy eventually led to non-aggression agreements with Angola and Mozambique in 1984, which required these countries to end support for the ANC and SWAPO, and for Pretoria to cease supporting UNITA and RENAMO.[101] However, Pretoria made no serious effort to implement them. Instead "[t]he wars continued with scarcely a pause."[102]

2.1.2. Total Onslaught

The SADF's approach to COIN emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, was only formally articulated within the later ideological framework of *total onslaught*. This onslaught was considered to be aimed at all aspects of society, was "...inspired from abroad and coordinated by the communist powers."[103] The concept defined how the government reacted to the crisis, and by 1973, elementary versions were included in defence documents. However, it was only in the 1977 Defence White Paper that *total onslaught* and its response was articulated and entrenched within the SADF's threat assessment.[104] In this paper, lay South Africa's COIN wars.

Noting the need for interdependent and coordinated action, the paper argues for the necessity of *Total National Strategy* to be formulated at the highest level.[105] Objectives included: securing the government and its institutions; identifying, preventing and countering subversion and revolution; and countering any form of revolutionary action.

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[97] Minter, 119.
[98] TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Outside South Africa (1960-1990)," *Volume 2* (Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd, 1998), (50) – (51), (54), and (58).
[99] Minter, 119; Johnson and Martin, 15-16. For example, Zimbabwe sought to divert its trade via Mozambique, however, all but one of the routes were systematically sabotaged. The only route left untouched was the direct rail line from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Johnson and Martin, 86.
[100] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 143.
[101] The Lusaka Accord with Angola and Nkomati Accord with Mozambique.
[102] Minter, 42.
[103] Grundy, 10. Or *"All the leaders of the so-called frontline states...have thus far promised their absolute support...to the communist-inspired terrorist organizations such as the ANC... and SWAPO in their so-called liberation struggle...In this they have the tangible support of the Russian Marxists..."* Malan, *Debates of the House of Assembly* (South Africa: Friday 20 May 1983), cols. 7538-7541.
[104] Alden, 41and 45.
[105] Department of Defence (DOD), *White Paper on Defence 1977*, (South Africa: Department of Defence, 1977), (1)-(2) and (6).

The national defence structure was to be developed to be able to counter any threat. COIN warfare was to be provided for, and permanent force soldiers were to form the nucleus of the SADF. Intelligence networks and a capability for operating anywhere in the region were to be developed. While the SAP were responsible for countering internal unrest, the army was likewise required to provide support.[106] Prime Minister Vorster was not entirely convinced by this strategy, however, was persuaded otherwise in order to counter the growing unrest. As Nortje argues, "It was a watershed decision that would shape both the face of war and the psyche of an entire generation on the African subcontinent."[107] The relationship between the SADF and SAP was set, destabilization put into effect, local peoples recruited, special forces developed, and COIN training intensified.

As the *total onslaught* evolved into *revolutionary onslaught*, so internal deployment of the army increased.[108] To cope with rising internal unrest, the capabilities and area coverage of the Commandos was expanded in 1982, and by 1986 the SADF was being used alongside the police to maintain law and order.[109]

Total onslaught thus reflected both the mindset of Apartheid leaders and their sense of the challenge to their authority. It shaped their response to that challenge, and was central in the justification and rationalization of learning COIN by the military.

2.1.3. Conclusion

Insurgency both within and beyond South Africa amounted to a crisis of legitimacy for the white minority ruled Apartheid state. This crisis came to be understood in terms of a total and later revolutionary onslaught. Insurgency got underway during the early 1960s in Namibia and South Africa. The former was characterized by rural guerrilla action, and the latter reflected both rural action and urban uprising. The insurgencies were limited prior to the independence of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. However, after, the insurgencies spilled over into these states through insurgents using them as bases, and destabilization carried out by Pretoria in and against these states for supporting the insurgencies. This political environment was ideal for learning COIN, and allowed the SADF to acquire extensive experience in several, varied COIN wars.

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[106] Ibid., (22i), (20)-(24) and (25c).
[107] Piet Nortje, *32 Battalion. The Inside Story of South Africa's Elite Fighting Unit* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2003), 125-126.
[108] DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1979*, (South Africa: Department of Defence, 1979), (29)-(30).
[109] DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1984* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 1984), (25)-(28); DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1986* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 1986), (71)-(76).

2.2. PRAGMATISM

As the SADF's engagement with COIN intensified from the late 1960s, the military took a pragmatic approach to learning COIN. While dipping into theory, the SADF preferred to rely on practice. This preference drew on formative experiences, decentralized structures, a need to make do with few resources, and an inherent willingness to adapt. The SADF thus embraced a favourable approach and learned COIN.

2.2.1. Theory

The SADF was either preparing for or conducting COIN, resulting in a dramatic expansion and revision of doctrine. The policy framework of *total onslaught* was translated into a *Total National Strategy*. This strategic doctrine was embodied in the 1977 White Paper, and served as the basis of the SADF's response to insurgency. It amounted to a comprehensive doctrine, and emphasized the political, military and economic aspects of COIN warfare.[110]

Total strategy drew inspiration from a variety of sources, however, most notably the French general André Beaufre and his *An Introduction to Strategy*.[111] Total strategy can be understood as a development of Beaufre's indirect strategy. Based on French COIN experiences in Indochina and Algeria, Beaufre advocated that total onslaughts demand total, indirect counter-strategies that coordinate military policy with political and economic policy.[112] Strategies by which the result is "...achieved primarily ...by methods in which the military play no more than an auxiliary role."[113]

SADF theory was also influenced by former army chief, Lieutenant-General C.A. *Pop* Fraser. Influenced by French experiences and a veteran of Malaya, Fraser wrote several documents on COIN during the 1960s. His *Lessons Drawn from Past Revolutionary Wars* became a blueprint for COIN strategy. According to Fraser, the basic site of revolutionary warfare was the population, and thus counter-revolutionary warfare must operate on the same terrain.[114]

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[110] Rocky Williams, "The Role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the Re-Professionalisation of the South African Armed Forces," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 21 (1999): EBSCO electronic database; Toase, 190.
[111] Philip H. Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians. Civil-Military Relations in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 133-134.
[112] Gavin Cawthra, *Securing South Africa's Democracy. Defence, Development and Security in Transition* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997), 33 and 47-48.
[113] Général d'Armée André Beaufre, *Strategy of Action*, trans. Major-General R.H. Barry (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 111-112.
[114] Ellis, 270; TRC of South Africa Report, "National Overview," (61).

American J. J. McCuen and his *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War* was likewise influential.[115] Like many other theorists of the 1960s, McCuen held a mirror to what Mao had said about guerrilla warfare, that guerrilla warfare was a protracted, phased struggle. Consequently, counter-revolution "...had to arrest the progression in its prevailing phase, then force the guerrilla back into an earlier phase."[116] In turn, the SADF held that any strategy was dependent on the assessing of the particular stage of development of the insurgency. This was then to be followed by the implementation of a counter-phase.[117] Considered to be more practical than Beaufre, McCuen was applied both in Namibia and domestically.[118]

However, there was recognition within the military that local conditions made it unwise to merely translate established theories. Instead, SADF leaders found themselves obliged to improvise.[119] Additional cases were drawn on, namely, Kenya, Israel, and Latin America, and *strategy* was understood to require continual adaptation to changing situations.[120]

Revolutionary onslaught was articulated in the 1986 White Paper on Defence, and was understood to be as a result of developmental problems. In turn, the state attempted to buy legitimacy in exchange for socio-economic benefits.[121] SADF theory became centred on halting and reversing revolutionary organization through the influencing of the population to support evolutionary change. Grievances were to be addressed, revolutionaries *taken out*, and communities organized under favourable leaders.[122] However, this new version merely justified terror and violence as the SADF increasingly resorted to force.[123]

More broadly, the SADF took a WHAM approach and advocated a struggle that was 80% political and 20% military. Recognizing the need to act as part of a political plan, Pretoria persisted in thinking that the provision of benefits would bring about legitimacy.

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[115] John J. McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War. The Strategy of Counter-insurgency* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966).
[116] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 140.
[117] TRC of South Africa Report, "National Overview," (64).
[118] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 29.
[119] Alden, 219.
[120] DOD, *White Paper on Defence 1977*, (7).
[121] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 164, 193 and 195; DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1986*, (9)-(10).
[122] South African National Defence Force Nodal Point, 14; Mark Swilling and Mark Phillips, "State Power in the 1980s: From 'total strategy' to 'counter-revolutionary warfare'," in *War and Society. The Militarisation of South Africa*, (eds.) Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1989), 144 and 147; Cawthra, *Securing South Africa's Democracy. Defence, Development and Security in Transition*, 48.
[123] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 187 and 164.

However, the SADF ultimately failed to check the growing support for the insurgents.[124] Total and revolutionary onslaught were primarily political rather than military theories. Yet, together they bred zealousness and fanaticism.[125] While the notion of WHAM was instilled in the higher ranks and DMI, such ideas tended to decline in the lower ranks where blatant racism dominated.[126]

Either way, in practice the SADF tended towards the imperial approach. Independence strife, disunity and civil war within the region lent to "...the recruiting of locals to fight outsiders' causes."[127] The independence of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, presented the SADF with a number of opportunities for establishing and supporting fighting units comprised of enemies of Apartheid's enemies. This included recruiting former opponents of new regimes and COIN specialists displaced after independence, as well as supplying already existing movements.[128] Through these the SADF was able to wage COIN against the insurgents, and to affect instability within the states which harboured them, ultimately discouraging the support of such forces.

Therefore, the SADF largely discounted theory and preferred to rely on experience.[129] Instead of attempting to implement a set theory, the SADF applied theories selectively and in accordance with local circumstances. Moreover, for all its WHAM rhetoric, the military ultimately embraced the imperial approach to COIN, and was to make extensive use of local forces.

2.2.2. Practice

Despite developing COIN theory, the SADF's primary source of inspiration was its practice. Both this approach and its experiences, structure and access to resources allowed for the military to learn COIN. Its early encounters with COIN were defined by varied experiences in southern Africa, regimental and decentralized key structures, few resources and the use of the imperial approach to contra-mobilize forces to compensate for its shortage in manpower. In line with its historical traditions, this response to insurgency was one indicative of a culture open to adaptation.

2.2.2.1. Formative Experiences

The forerunner to the SADF was the UDF. As part of its formation the UDF adopted British military practices, and a role which included preventing and suppressing

[124] Grundy, 27; Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 150 and 216; Minter, 113.
[125] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 187-188.
[126] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 45.
[127] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 234.
[128] Ibid., 309.
[129] LTC Abel Esterhuyse, interview with author, Cape Town, 7 July 2005.

terrorism and internal disorder, and undertaking policing duties.[130] Through this the military was primarily involved in policing the disenfranchised and dealing with challenges from below.[131] This historical, colonial-type policing role prepared the SADF for COIN as they looked to the methods of others with more direct experience.

The SADF provided covert assistance to the Portuguese and the Rhodesians during the 1960s and 1970s.[132] The long-term impact of these experiences is seen in the methods and tactics used by the SADF. For example, the turning of captured insurgents and pseudo-operations.[133] The integration of members of the Portuguese and Rhodesian security forces (many of whom were seasoned COIN specialists) likewise allowed for a direct absorption of knowledge into the SADF.[134] SADF members also received training abroad. Training in Israel, for example, is evident in their use of pre-emptive attacks on external insurgent bases.[135] Known as *forward* defence, this tactic began to be used during the late 1970s, and resulted in an increase in raids on specific targets, and later deep-penetration pre-emptive strikes.[136]

However, the most significant influence on SADF methods were those of the SAP. The SADF adopted many practices of the SAP's Security Branch in the Operational Zone. Many of these policemen had been deployed in Rhodesia where they had trained in COIN with the Selous Scouts, including cross-border raids on insurgent bases, pseudo-operations, the turning of captured insurgents, and the recruiting of displaced soldiers.[137] When these policemen were officially withdrawn from Rhodesia in 1975, many were then sent to Namibia, taking these methods with them. From there they were militarized by Army Intelligence and the DMI. However, when the Security Branch left the Operational Zone, the SADF had to fend for itself in terms of information gathering. The military made considerable efforts to improve their intelligence capacities, for example, with the transferral of Army Intelligence officers to the

[130] This role was defined in the 1912 Defence Act, by which the UDF was created. Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 18.
[131] Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians. Civil-Military Relations in South Africa*, 1; Grundy, 37-38.
[132] TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Outside South Africa (1960-1990)," (166) – (167).
[133] *Turning* involved insurgents joining their enemies after torture. *Pseudo-operations* were involved black soldiers disguised as insurgents used to gather intelligence and carry out atrocities to discredit the insurgency. Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 190. Jakkie Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 118-134; Minter, 124.
[134] Approximately 5000 Rhodesian personnel were incorporated into the SADF after Zimbabwean independence. TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Outside South Africa (1960-1990)," (178)-(179).
[135] The idea is to hit the insurgents before they are able to infiltrate into the territory. Toase, 213.
[136] For example, the attack on the SWAPO refugee and recruiting camp at Cassinga (250km into Angola) in May 1978. This commando and bombing raid was conducted as part of *Operation Reindeer*, and killed over 600 SWAPO supporters. After Cassinga, pre-emptive attacks became standard within the overall strategy. South African National Defence Force Nodal Point, 12; Minter, 114; Toase, 213.
[137] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 185 and 309.

Operational Zone to work as interrogators. Importantly, such officers made use of Security Branch methods in Angola, Namibia, and later in South Africa.[138]

Of note were those used by the Security Branch's paramilitary unit *Koevoet*. Koevoet was established in 1979 and was modelled on the Selous Scouts and Portuguese *Flechas*. Many members were veterans of the Rhodesian war, and were trained in "...the art of ambushing, tracking, bush survival and murder."[139] The unit dominated COIN in Namibia and operated as a combat unit, tracking and apprehending suspected insurgents over long distances and difficult terrain. The unit made use of informers, pseudo-operations, and members of local communities, with the majority of Koevoet personnel being Ovambo.[140] Recruits also included turned SWAPO fighters (*askaris*).

The SAP likewise made use of death squads, and the likes of torture and extrajudicial killing as standard techniques. In turn, the military created, for example, the CCB death squad, and torture was institutionalized as a military technique.[141] When back on home soil during the 1980s, DMI brought these methods with, and used their Namibian practice to interpret information, identify targets, and cultivate sources.[142]

Thus the SADF acted on the precedents of others, and "...claimed that they learned from others and then perfected lessons learnt through local practice."[143] The Namibian experience defined SADF COIN. It was used as a laboratory in which COIN strategies were tried and tested, and was an arena in which the SADF learned by doing, as well as from the SAP. [144] Importantly, this encounter with COIN fundamentally shaped how the SADF waged war. Many of the methods developed in Namibia were then transferred to the domestic campaign.[145]

[138] Ibid., 185, 196 and 113; Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 18.
[139] Denis Herbstein and John Evenson, *The Devils Are Among Us. The War for Namibia* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1989), 64.
[140] TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Outside South Africa (1960-1990)," (116); Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 225.
[141] TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Outside South Africa (1960-1990)," (96) and (122).
[142] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 186-187, 249 and 313.
[143] Ibid., 191.
[144] Cawthra, *Securing South Africa's Democracy. Defence, Development and Security in Transition*, 43.
[145] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 139.

2.2.2.2. Structure

2.2.2.2.1. Structures & Specialists

The structure of the army was a compromise between the British standing model and a modified commando system used earlier by the Afrikaners to wage frontier wars.[146]

The army consisted of permanent and part-time soldiers divided into two main operational wings: a conventional force; and a larger COIN or Territorial Force. The latter was divided into ten regional commands and the Walvis Bay military area. It was charged with maintaining internal security, supporting the SAP and preventing border infiltrations. The infantry division of the army was the backbone of the army, and was comprised of 16 Permanent Force and full-time National Service (conscript) units, 45 part-time Citizen Force units and more than 200 Commando units – all of which were trained in COIN. Importantly, all members of the army were trained in COIN, including tank and artillery regiments, which were deployed as such when required.[147]

Specific COIN forces were organized under the *Area Defence* system, in which Citizen Force and conscript units provided a reaction force in each territorial command. Area Defence amounted to rural COIN. It came about as a result of the intensification of the insurgency, and the need to counter border infiltrations and eliminate any internal insurgent bases.[148] The commandos or local militias (divided into rural, urban and industrial commandos) were central in Area Defence, and supported the SAP in defending a designated territorial area.

The special forces, however, were the backbone of the COIN fighting force. Overt regional engagement began with *Operation Savannah,* the SADF's 1975 invasion of Angola.[149] Importantly, the operation was conducted in the manner of a special forces operation,[150] and in its wake, an Army Intelligence programme that had been training officers as special operators was expanded into the *Reconnaissance Commandos* or later *Regiments* (*Recces*). The Recces and other special forces units played a key role in the COIN wars, and were used to conduct direct operations against insurgents,

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[146] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 6; Grundy, 7.
[147] Grundy, 31; South African National Defence Force Nodal Point, 43; Mark Philips, "The Nuts and Bolts of Military Power: The Structure of the SADF," in *War and Society. The Militarisation of South Africa*, (eds.) Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1989), 20; Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 118-119.
[148] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 228.
[149] The operation aimed to install a client UNITA/FNLA regime and began in August 1975. Despite some initial success, when unable to strengthen its forces, the SADF withdrew to just within the Angolan border. Ibid., 24 and 146.
[150] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 213.

pseudo-operations, train proxy forces internally and externally, and conduct destabilization in the region.[151] Importantly, active recruitment of former Angolan and Mozambican soldiers, Portuguese and Rhodesian officers, resulted in the Recces having a thorough knowledge of the region.

During Savannah, the SADF likewise encountered what remained of the FNLA, and turned them into an elite COIN battalion that operated in the Namibian/Angolan arena: the 32 or *Buffalo* Battalion. The 32 was employed solely as a COIN unit, and later in a semi-conventional capacity. It was considered that SWAPO was too numerous and well equipped to be taken head on, and instead guerrilla warfare was the only way to regain the initiative. As such, the 32 were designed to *out-guerrilla* SWAPO.[152]

Other specialist units included the 44 Parachute Brigade, the Headquarters Pathfinder Company of 44 Brigade, and the Army Intelligence *Hammer* Units. The latter were developed in the Eastern Cape Territorial Command, and were designed for urban and rural COIN.[153]

The DMI likewise played a central role in COIN, and particularly from the 1970s during which it was deployed in the Operational Zone.[154] After the independence of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Special Forces was absorbed by DMI and became Special Operations (*Spestake*).[155] Through this, the SADF acquired a vast capacity for COIN domestically and regionally. Part of DMI was the DCI which created networks of informers and recruited former Rhodesian and FNLA soldiers. DCI acted much like the Security Branch and was active in all areas of COIN.[156] DMI likewise created Delta-40 in 1979, a death squad which was renamed the CCB in 1986. It was comprised of former special forces and murder and robbery unit policemen, and conducted internal and external COIN.[157] A further unit was the DST. Responsible for liaisons with regional proxies, the unit was divided into DST1 and DST2. DST1 was responsible for UNITA,

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[151] O'Brien, "Special Forces for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare: The South African Case," 80 and 96.
[152] See Nortje; Colonel Jan Breytenbach, *The Buffalo Soldiers. The Story of South Africa's 32-Battalion, 1975-1993* (South Africa: Galago, 2002), 178.
[153] This included follow-up operations after infiltrations, intelligence operations, and cooperation with the SAP and the South African Railway Police. Sam Sole, "The Hammer Unit and the Goniwe Murders," in *The Hidden Hand. Covert Operations in South Africa*, (eds.) Anthony Minnaar, Ian Liebenberg and Charl Schutte (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1994), 279-280.
[154] TRC of South Africa Report, "Appendix. State Security Forces: Directory of Organizations and Structures," *Volume 2* (Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd, 1998), (33).
[155] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 185-186.
[156] Ibid., 185-186 and 213.
[157] A number of these policemen had even served time in prison. Jacques Pauw, *Into the Heart of Darkness. Confessions of Apartheid's Assassins* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1997), 10; Guy Lamb, "From Military to Civilian Life. The Case of Retired Special Forces Operators," *Track Two* 12 (September 2003): 42.

and DST2 for RENAMO and Zimbabwean dissidents. Similarly, during the 1980s, DST operated internally under *Operation Marion* (which assisted the IFP) and *Operation Katzen* (which targeted the Transkei and Ciskei Homelands).[158]

Therefore, the SADF was comprised of various forces which were trained and designed for COIN warfare. While all forces acquired some COIN training, the primary soldiers involved in COIN were those in the commandos and the special forces. The DMI was likewise heavily involved in COIN, under which a number of structures were created and coordinated. As the backbone of the military's COIN fighting forces, they learned COIN devastatingly well.

2.2.2.2.2. Methods & Techniques

2.2.2.2.2.1. General Methods

The army began training in COIN in 1968, and first became involved when deployed to replace the SAP in the Operational Zone. By 1973 it was an established part of training.[159] Overall, SADF COIN included classic methods and techniques: rural and urban patrols, roadblocks, crowd control, curfews, cordon-and-search operations, cross-border search-and-destroy incursions, and hot-pursuit missions. Local military capabilities were developed (the SWATF) and all military activities were brought under Defence Headquarters in Windhoek, through which Pretoria "...exercised full control over...all COIN activities..."[160]

Attempts were made to provide coordinated, reliable intelligence.[161] Captured insurgents were turned, and pseudo-operations conducted. Special units were created, such as the Recces and the 32. The Recces, for example, conducted clandestine and covert operations in South Africa and other African countries, although particularly northern Namibia, Angola and Mozambique.[162] While each regiment had specializations,[163] overall they conducted long-range reconnaissance for strategic and

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[158] TRC of South Africa Report, "Appendix. State Security Forces: Directory of Organizations and Structures," (41)-(43); TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Outside South Africa (1960-1990)," (175).
[159] Grundy, 9; Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 139.
[160] Toase, 209.
[161] South African National Defence Force Nodal Point, 11.
[162] Lamb, "From Military to Civilian Life. The Case of Retired Special Forces Operators," 42.
[163] 1 Recce was an airborne regiment which specialized in external landward actions. 2 Recce was a Citizen Force organization for former Recces. 4 Recce was a seaborne regiment, specializing in the likes of underwater demolitions and diving. 5 Recce was an airborne and landward regiment that specialized in COIN warfare. 3 Recce was comprised of former Rhodesian SAS and Selous Scouts. Up until 1981 it was involved in operations in Zimbabwe. It then joined with Delta-40 and became *Project Barnacle*, under which it engaged in internal urban COIN operations.

tactical intelligence gathering; strategic offensive action; sabotage; and COIN; often deep in enemy territory with minimal support.[164]

Importantly, techniques were both acquired from others and developed through experience with the insurgencies. Overall, the SADF acquired COIN skills in urban and rural Namibia, Angola and then South Africa, as well as cultural and environmental knowledge regarding southern Africa.[165] The decentralized nature of the specialist units established were likewise well suited to learning COIN and addressing insurgency within and beyond the borders of the country.

2.2.2.2.2.2. Hearts, Minds & Something Else

Beyond the special forces, the SADF likewise attempted a broader WHAM campaign in both Namibia and South Africa.

While conscripts were used in patrols and offensive operations, they were also used to provide services such as teachers, engineers and veterinarians as part of Civic Action programmes introduced to Namibia in 1974. These programmes eventually fell under COMOPS, which conducted psychological operations and propaganda in Namibia, including radio broadcasts and dropping pamphlets over rural areas by air.[166] These pamphlets aimed to discredit SWAPO and portray the military in a *positive* light. Some were subtly entitled "Join SWAPO and die".[167]

Civic Action was aimed at securing the cooperation of the Namibian people by alleviating grievances.[168] SADF personnel were to promote good relations with the local population, combat *undesirable elements*, and protect "...citizens against contamination by terrorists."[169] However, actions often coincided with military operations, and instead of development, the vast majority of Namibians were living in deteriorating conditions.[170] As such, actions tended to be aimed against the population rather than in their defence or for their benefit.[171]

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[164] Paul Els, *We Fear Naught But God. The Story of the South African Special Forces* (Johannesburg: Covos-Day Books, 2000), 8; Lamb, "From Military to Civilian Life. The Case of Retired Special Forces Operators," 42.
[165] Ian Liebenberg, "The Integration of the Military in Post-Liberation South Africa: The Contribution of Revolutionary Armies," *Armed Forces & Society* 24 (Fall 1997): EBSCO electronic database.
[166] Ibid.
[167] F.J. Burger, *Teeninsurgensie in Namibië. Die Rol van die Polisie*, unpublished Masters diss. (University of South Africa, 1992), 247.
[168] Alden, 100; Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians. Civil-Military Relations in South Africa*, 41.
[169] DOD, *White Paper on Defence 1977*, (60).
[170] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 205.
[171] See Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia*, 246-247.

As the WHAM campaign failed, so SADF atrocities increased. The SADF aimed to weaken SWAPO through a series of *voorsprong* (advantage) operations, beginning with *Operation Reindeer* in 1978. This was followed by an emphasis on forward defence and several major incursions into Angola, reflecting the end of COIN's civic methods of persuasion and refining the fight as a frontier war.[172] The SADF continued to profess that COIN was 80% political and 20% military, however, this was not being practised on foreign soil. From 1981, the SADF carried out bombing raids, infiltrated into southern Angola, mined roads, and destroyed villages.[173]

Undeterred by the failure of Civic Action in Namibia, the SADF made similar efforts in its internal WHAM campaign. Conscripts were deployed, propaganda pamphlets were spread, and black paramilitary organizations were developed.[174] However, the resurgence in unrest in 1983, resulted in the SADF being deployed extensively along the borders and as back-up to the SAP after October 1984.[175] The 1985 State of Emergency gave the SADF further powers by which their activities "...became virtually indistinguishable from those of the police."[176] The SADF patrolled townships; broke up meetings; manned roadblocks; enforced curfews; shot and tear-gassed residents; and conducted cordon-and-search operations.[177] The 1986 State of Emergency resulted in more intensified cooperation with the SAP. However, by early 1987 the SADF began to play a less direct role, allowing conservative black forces to take the lead.[178]

As such, the SADF attempted to engage in WHAM, however, overwhelmingly failed to appreciate the flaws in their approach. The illegitimacy of the regime and the military's use of force made it impossible for such a campaign to be effective.

2.2.2.3. Resources

2.2.2.3.1. Access

Access to material resources was limited as a result of arms embargoes in opposition to the regime. While attempts at self-sufficiency were successful to an extent, sanctions

[172] *Operation Sceptic* (June 1980), *Operation Protea* (August 1981), *Operation Daisy* (November 1981), *Operation Super* (March 1982), *Operation Mebos* (July-August 1982), *Operation Phoenix* (February-April 1983), and *Operation Askari* (December 1983). Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 226-227 and 239.
[173] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 150; TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Outside South Africa (1960-1990)," (65).
[174] Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 236-237.Grundy, 61;
[175] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 176.
[176] Laurie Nathan, "Troops in the Townships, 1984-1987," in *War and Society. The Militarisation of South Africa*, eds. Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip), 67.
[177] South African National Defence Force Nodal Point, 62-66; Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 240 and 251.
[178] Nathan, "Troops in the Townships, 1984-1987," 67.

limited development and supply, and the SADF had to make do without. However, the most problematic shortage was manpower.

In the face of heightened threat, an expansion programme for the SADF was launched in 1974. This resulted in a sharp rise in defence spending to R700 million in 1974-1975, peaking at R1800 million by 1978-1979.[179] To promote self-sufficiency, ARMSCOR was established in 1974. However, its capacity for producing heavy armour was limited, and economic constraints proved a constant limitation.[180] Up until 1963, South Africa had received most of its armaments from Britain. In that year the UN imposed an arms embargo, however, it only became mandatory in 1977. Despite violations, the embargo hindered the development of equipment and technology, and led to serious shortages.[181]

However, the most significant shortage faced by the SADF was that of manpower. Securing sufficient human resources was a problem particularly with regards to the permanent force. For example, in 1977 permanent members only comprised 7% of the overall SADF.[182] One solution was the extension of national service from 12 months to 24 months. However, the need for greater numbers of permanent soldiers persisted with regards to operational duty, preparing the SADF for warfare, leading and training conscript units, and operating sophisticated weapons systems.[183]

Added to this was the military's reluctance to sustain casualties, particularly conscript casualties – no matter how imminent the *rooi gevaar* might have been, white South Africa was not quite convinced it was sufficiently perilous to warrant their sons coming home in body bags. This made it impossible for the SADF to withstand attrition, and as the situation worsened, so it necessitated the contra-mobilization of proxy forces, the use of UNITA, the 32, and SWATF. As the conflict became progressively conventional, the SADF's military vulnerabilities were exposed.[184] In terms of infantry, the SADF was limited to UNITA, 32 Battalion, and conscripts. Domestic deployment in the 1980s resulted in a further strain on manpower. As Minter argues, "There were never enough

[179] This levelled out during the early 1980s, and did so despite an overall increase in SADF activities. DOD, *White Paper on Defence 1977*, (31)-(32); DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1979*, (76).
[180] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 239; DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1984*, (88)-(89).
[181] DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1986*, (43); Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 89. Prior to the embargo becoming mandatory, South Africa accessed armaments through France, Italy and Israel.
[182] DOD, *White Paper on Defence 1977*, (46)-(47).
[183] DOD, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply 1979*, (11) and (20).
[184] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 239 and 256.

white soldiers to cover all the fronts..."[185] Given white South Africa's sensitivity to casualties, military strategy aimed to reduce risks to white soldiers. As a result, success depended on allies and proxies.[186]

Access to material resources was increasingly limited due to the consequences of arms embargoes on the development and supply of equipment and technology. Access to sufficient manpower was limited in terms of the need for skilled permanent soldiers, and in the military's use and reliance on conscripts. Their use impacted on the SADF's ability to withstand attrition and necessitated the contra-mobilization of proxy forces.

2.2.2.3.2. Imperial Methods & Uncivil Wars

The arming and training of proxy forces was a distinct feature of the SADF's COIN, and was indicative of the military's imperial preference for COIN. Through this method they were able to *keep the pot boiling*, create and sustain enemies of their enemies, and create a number of civil wars in Southern Africa.[187] As a result, the domestic conflict was deflected beyond South Africa. The SADF came upon this method opportunistically in its encountering, incorporating and supporting of groups emerging out of bitter liberation and anti-colonial struggles in the region. Importantly, while the military took advantage of existing fracture-lines between external groups already at odds with each other, internally, it was more active in creating these fracture-lines.

In Namibia/Angola, elite units were supported by segregated black units within the SWATF from 1974. For example, 201 Battalion (San) and 101 Battalion (Ovambo).[188] These capabilities were enhanced with the integration of disaffected members of the *Flechas*, Selous Scouts and Rhodesian SAS, who were assigned to the 32, Pathfinder Company and the Recces. Importantly, while some local peoples were recruited as volunteers, others were kidnapped and tortured into joining.[189]

The SADF's most notable proxy forces were UNITA and RENAMO. As civil war unfolded in Angola, anti-communist UNITA was identified as the MPLA's primary enemy and as being the *most friendly* towards South Africa. Pretoria began supporting

[185] Minter, 123; See Grundy, 28.
[186] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 229.
[187] Pauw, 253; Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 220-221 and 235; Cawthra, 141.
[188] Others included the102 Battalion (Kaokoland) and 202 Battalion (Kavango). All relied on volunteers until 1980 when conscription of indigenous people was put into effect. Cawthra, *Brutal Force. The Apartheid War Machine*, 131; Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 221.
[189] Minter, 125.

UNITA in its efforts to oust the MPLA, destabilize Angola and counter SWAPO.[190] Pretoria similarly used RENAMO to destabilize Mozambique and counter the ANC. Having taken over RENAMO from the Rhodesians, the SADF unleashed a newly trained RENAMO in 1980, and escalated violence to include terrorism and sabotage.[191] Both UNITA and RENAMO were dependent on the SADF for supplies and training. UNITA also received aid from the US, however, relied on the SADF for logistical support. While UNITA retained a degree of independence, the SADF was more directly involved with RENAMO's planning and strategy.[192]

Internally, contra-mobilization was used "...to organize and support 'moderate blacks' to oppose the revolutionary movements."[193] Similar to external operations, logistical and financial support was used to manage proxy forces. Most significant of which was the IFP from 1985. IFP hit-squads were developed to eliminate ANC leaders and supporters in Natal.[194] Training was conducted covertly under *Operation Marion* by DMI and the special forces. In 1986, 200 IFP members underwent training in the Caprivi Strip, and were instructed in interrogation techniques, weapons and hit-squad activities.[195] Once trained these members were incorporated into the KwaZulu Police Force and charged with the training of Inkatha Protection Units, which became Inkatha's paramilitary wing. This was probably one of the most effective internal COIN tactics of all, as these units and hit-squads directly fought the ANC in their own communities and settlements.[196]

The SADF embraced the imperial approach both externally and internally. It used and created indigenous and proxy forces to counter the insurgencies which it faced,

[190] By July 1975, civil war had become a reality in Angola as UNITA, the MPLA and the FNLA vied for control of the country. The SADF crossed the border in August. However, when the South Africans withdrew in March 1976, the MPLA was able to achieve an apparent victory. This eliminated the FNLA as a serious contender and drove UNITA into the south-eastern bush. Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 210 and 219.

[191] Comprised of members of the Portuguese security forces and anti-FRELIMO movements, RENAMO was created by Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organization. The transfer to South African control resulted in a restructuring of RENAMO and the incorporation of RENAMO and Rhodesian personnel into South African special forces. In the subsequent escalation in violence and scope of activities, civilians became the primary targets, bridges and power stations were blown up, and schools and clinics destroyed. Alex Vines, *RENAMO. From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?* 2nd ed. (London: James Currey Ltd, 1996), 18-19; Johnson and Martin, 17-18; Mamdani, 89.

[192] Minter, 198.

[193] TRC of South Africa Report, "The State Inside South Africa (1960-1990)," *Volume 2* (Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd, 1998)," (555).

[194] Paulus Zulu, "Third Force Operations in South Africa," in *The Hidden Hand. Covert Operations in South Africa*, (eds.) Anthony Minnaar, Ian Liebenberg and Charl Schutte (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1994), 162-164; Kevin O'Brien, "The Use of Assassination as a Tool of State Policy: South Africa's Counter-Revolutionary Strategy 1979-92 (Part II)," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13 (Summer 2001): 119-120.

[195] O'Brien, "The Use of Assassination as a Tool of State Policy: South Africa's Counter-Revolutionary Strategy 1979-92 (Part II)," 120; See Bopela and Luthuli, 199-211.

[196] Ellis, 275; Sparks, 119-138.

fostering insurgency to conduct COIN, making use of local peoples to provide information on the conflict and the terrain, and to compromise for its lack of manpower. This contra-mobilization of forces was central to the SADF's ability to deflect the insurgencies. Thus limited human resources, led the SADF to learn the most enduring and effective of all COIN methods.

2.2.2.4. Culture

The SA military has a rich and diverse history reflecting a variety of themes, cultures, traditions, organizational features and combat experiences.[197] These have been recorded in innumerable regimental and campaign histories, historical studies, and biographies. The SADF itself, was born primarily out of the British imperial tradition, however, similarly had roots in the Afrikaner civil-military tradition, or more specifically, the Boer commando system.[198] This varied past involving commando-styled irregular warfare, colonial policing, and a distinct British military influence in structure and sentiment, resulted in a military with the right attitudes, conventions and valued principles to learn COIN.

The creation of the UDF in 1912, reflected the bringing together of various different military formations under the British model. However, the history of the SA military preceded the British by 150 years, during which various concepts were developed "...within the local context of white settler defence to form a foundation of ideas and practices upon which British militarism was to build..."[199] Most notable was the *commando* which emphasized irregular military action carried out by the citizen-soldier. This emerged from the tradition of all white citizens having to bear arms to assist in defence of the Cape and on border regions.[200] Whereas the British model of a small, standing professional force emphasized the deployment of disciplined formations with heavy firepower, the commando focused on the use of small, lightly armed, mobile units. The commandos likewise fought as subsidiary parts of the British Army during the 19th century, in which their mobile, light-infantry tactics were widely influential.

As such, the organizing values, standards and conventions which came to characterize the SADF were as a result of the exposure of local armed forces to the British tradition. The military did indeed undergo a period of *Afrikanerization* under the nationalists after 1948, during which the military was *remade* in terms of personnel, insignia, uniforms,

[197] Williams, "The Other Armies: Writing the History of MK," 22.
[198] Ibid; Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians. Civil-Military Relations in South Africa*, 19.
[199] Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians. Civil-Military Relations in South Africa*, 19.
[200] Ibid., 20.

and the renaming of regiments.[201] However, the history of the SA military remained as one primarily defined by colonial policing roles shaped within a wider imperial military tradition. A tradition characterized by a sense of purpose and mission that went beyond the defence of national sovereignty, and included the aiding, subduing and policing of others beyond national borders.

Both the imperial British and unconventional commando traditions engendered favourable attitudes towards adaptability, flexibility and innovativeness. Consequently, when the SADF came to be faced with several insurgent enemies simultaneously, it was willing to learn, adopt methods from others and manipulate them to suit its specific circumstances. It had developed a culture, however haphazardly, which was open to adaptation.

Therefore, the SADF exhibited a culture which valued adaptability. It had been fostered through various traditions characterized by cultures which value improvisation and flexibility. Consequently, the culture of the SADF was open to adaptation and to learning COIN.

2.2.3. Conclusion

The SADF was essentially pragmatic in its approach to conducting COIN. While theory was produced it was largely discounted, and what was used was done so selectively. Instead the military relied on practice. This reliance was determined by its formative experiences with COIN in Namibia, its decentralized elite and commando structures, limited access to resources, use of proxy forces, and an inherited value of adaptability. These conditions informed the SADF's pragmatism, and thereby aided in the military learning COIN.

2.3. CONCLUSION

Factors determining whether a military is able to learn COIN include a political environment in which the ruling colonial or minority power faces a crisis of legitimacy, and in which this crisis takes the form of insurgency. Similarly, the respective military is required to be pragmatic in its approach to COIN. During the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa exhibited both.

The white minority-ruled Apartheid state faced an intensifying crisis of legitimacy from the 1960s. It was challenged through insurgency both within South Africa and Namibia.

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[201] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 8-9 and 94-95; Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians. Civil-Military Relations in South Africa*, 18-19.

The crisis was understood as a *total onslaught* on the state, and the SADF assigned the task of eliminating it. The insurgencies faced by the SADF involved multiple actors in both rural and urban environments. These actors included SWAPO in Namibia, and primarily the ANC in South Africa. The former fought a rural guerrilla struggle, and the latter a struggle characterized by both rural and urban action. Both insurgencies remained limited up until the independence of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. After independence, both insurgency and COIN overflowed into these and other neighbouring states. As such, the political environment in which the military had to learn COIN was favourable for doing so.

The SA military was simultaneously pragmatic in its approach. While developing COIN theory, the SADF had a habit of discounting it, and considered its application to be dependent on specific circumstances. Instead the military relied on practice. This reliance was rooted in the SADF's formative experiences in Namibia, and decentralized structures and elite units that led the COIN campaign. Resources were likewise few and the SADF had to make do with less, particularly with regards to human resources. A reliance on conscripts had resulted in an inability to withstand attrition, and in the military embracing the imperial method of COIN in its contra-mobilization of allied and proxy forces. Finally, the SADF had inherited a culture of amalgamated imperial and unconventional military traditions, open to adaptation and learning COIN.

Therefore, pragmatism and a crisis of legitimacy expressed through insurgency in the minority-ruled Apartheid state, allowed the SADF to learn COIN during the 1970s and 1980s. Knowledge gained was rich and diverse, and reflected a unique experience whereby simultaneous wars were fought against varied insurgent enemies.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SANDF: CONTINUING COIN

In a political environment defined by transition, and pragmatism within the military ambiguous, the future of COIN knowledge within the SANDF remains unclear. This chapter will consider to what extent COIN knowledge has been kept and continued by the SA military post 1994. It will first consider the political environment in which the military now finds itself, and then any pragmatism currently exhibited by the SANDF in terms of COIN theory and practice.

3.1. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT: TRANSITION

Apartheid formally ended in 1994. The unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 signalled the beginning of the transition. Negotiations soon got underway, determining that a new military was to be formed. Insurgents were integrated with the SADF, and new policies embraced a conventional approach, structuring the military in terms of function, posture and force design. The new SANDF was thus legitimised, and was soon being called to participate in PSOs. While the government resisted early pressure to become involved, persistent security concerns have resulted in the SANDF participating in PSOs throughout Africa. Nevertheless, the transition environment has not been favourable to continuing COIN, and has been fairly hostile to general offensive capabilities.

3.1.1. Transition & the Military

3.1.1.1. Negotiations & Navigations

"The future of the military lies at the heart of South Africa's transition."[202] As an enforcer of Apartheid, the military was considered key to ensuring a successful negotiated settlement.

Despite elements of the military being involved in third force violence, the SADF remained a coherent organization throughout the negotiation process. In this, "...it was the senior officers whose views counted most."[203] While they may have been nationalists, few wanted to derail the process. Instead, it was considered more important to secure a suitable settlement for the military within a future South Africa. The generals adopted a low political profile, characterized by rare, yet politically shrewd statements regarding how the military would serve the government of the day, and was an apolitical, professional force. By the end of 1992 the military signalled their

[202] Shaw, "Biting the Bullet. Negotiating Democracy's Defence," 228.
[203] Ellis, 294.

willingness to accept a settlement, and in April 1993, MK and the SADF met formally to begin negotiations on the future of the military.[204]

Both the SADF and MK agreed that the new military would embrace a posture of an apolitical defensive force charged with the protection of national sovereignty.[205] Statutory and non-statutory forces were to be integrated, with the new military comprising a core professional force and part-time reserves. SADF standards and values would be maintained, and the multi-party, parliamentary JSCD would be established to review legislation, expenditure and authorize decisions relating to weapons procurement, doctrine and deployment.[206]

The military further navigated itself through the TRC, emerging *less tainted* than that of the police.[207] Again the generals acted shrewdly, and when it came to the military's formal submission, they failed to admit to any wrongdoing and whitewashed all dark deeds.[208] However, unlike the police, the military was able to better deny their role in COIN, and had better negotiated a soft line on prosecution in exchange for support for the new government.[209]

Thus throughout the negotiation process the military continued to be considered a force to be reckoned with and a critical player to have on board for the success of both the process and the future government. Despite its actions during Apartheid, the military was able to navigate its way through the transition, and acquire a legitimacy in its preparedness to transform.

3.1.1.2. Consequences: Taming the Juggernaut

The SANDF is "...a creature that was born of compromise..."[210] and came into being at midnight on 26 April 1994. The military now began a complex process of integration and transformation. Notable changes to the posture, function and design of the military were determined in the 1996 Constitution, the 1996 White Paper on Defence, and the

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[204] Such statements were important as a professional force unconcerned with political affairs was unlikely to mount a coup. Ibid., 291-294; Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 271-272.
[205] Philip Frankel, *Soldiers in a Storm. The Armed Forces in South Africa's Democratic Transition* (United States of America: Westview Press, 2000), 28.
[206] Ibid, 40; Shaw, "Biting the Bullet. Negotiating Democracy's Defence," 248-249; Gavin Cawthra, "Security Governance in South Africa," *African Security Review* 14 (2005): 97; Cawthra, *Securing South Africa's Democracy: Defence, Development and Security in Transition*, 63.
[207] Ellis, 294.
[208] Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*, 2nd ed. (South Africa: Random House (Pty) Ltd, 2002), 57; Alex Boraine, *A Country Unmasked* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 168.
[209] Ellis, 294-295.
[210] Williams, "The Role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the Re-Professionalisation of the South African Armed Forces," EBSCO electronic database.

1998 Defence Review. These documents are the basis on which the SANDF has been developed. However, they have not been without criticism, and are under review.[211]

3.1.1.2.1. Function & Posture

The Constitution states that: "The primary object of the defence force is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force."[212] As such, it determines that the SANDF may be employed in the defence of the Republic, in cooperation with the police, or in fulfilment of an international obligation.[213] From this came the White Paper, the overarching policy framework for the SANDF. The paper determined that the primary function of the SANDF is *to defend against external military aggression*, with secondary functions including border protection, support for the police, and PSOs.[214]

The SANDF holds an overall defensive posture. It embraces the concept of non-offensive defence, a conventional approach to defence which renounces strategic offensive capabilities, and calls for a reduction in force levels and pre-emptive strike capability.[215] However, the SANDF does not follow a purist form. On the operational level, provision is made for rolling back offensive actions, necessitating offensive capabilities. While this posture is considered key in allowing the SANDF to participate in collective security structures, it is considered necessary to do so without undermining capabilities that provide "...the ability to operate in a tactically offensive manner."[216] South Africa thus takes a counter-force approach, deterrence that threatens to destroy enemy capabilities.[217]

This emphasis on conventional, non-offensive defence emerged out of the desire for a non-partisan, professional military, uninvolved in domestic affairs. In this, the influence of anti-militarist academics pushed towards a staunch conventional posture and

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[211] DOD, *Annual Report 2004/2005* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 2005), 3-4, http://www.dod.mil.za/documents/annualreports/AnualReport2005.pdf.
[212] *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, Chapter 11, para. 200(2).
[213] Ibid., Chapter 11, para. 201(2).
[214] DOD, *Defence in a Democracy: White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa 1996* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 1996), http://www.dod.mil.za/documents/WhitePaperDef/whitepaper%20%20defence1996.pdf , chapter 2, (3), chapter 5, (2) and (20).
[215] Offensiveness is considered to be derived from the structure of a military, military structures and capabilities must be defensive and non-threatening to other nations. Evert Jordaan and Abel Esterhuyse, "South African Defence Since 1994. The Influence of Non-Offensive Defence," *African Security Review* 13 (2004): 59; Cawthra, *Securing South Africa's Democracy. Defence, Development and Security in Transition*, 157.
[216] DOD, "Defence Update 2005," as presented to the Defence Portfolio Committee, South Africa, 17 August 2005, chapter 3, (10), http://www.pmg.org.za/docs/2005/050817update.doc.
[217] Jordaan and Esterhuyse, 66.

negative attitude towards offensive capabilities.[218] There likewise existed the belief that the end of Apartheid would bring an end to conflict in Africa. As a result, little consideration was given to the likes of PSOs in terms of structures, training and equipment required by the army.[219]

However, as part of a recent draft Defence Update, *defend* and *protect* are to entail conventional warfare *and* participation in PSOs. It has likewise been proposed that instead of *primary* and *secondary* functions, functions will be conceptualized as part of a series of objectives, for example, to defend and protect the sovereignty of the Republic, and to promote regional and continental security. The achievement of these will be through a missions-based approach by which objectives will be divided into a grouping of missions, allowing for the SANDF to prepare for all missions instead of merely a primary function.[220]

3.1.1.2.2. Design

The 1998 Defence Review outlined clearer policies with regards to force design determined by the primary function.[221] As no significant role in PSOs was foreseen, the only logical design was considered to be one against external aggression.[222]

The army is designed around a core conventional capability comprised of a small permanent force and large reserve force. Secondary functions are executed using the collateral utility available in this design.[223] The force design itself constitutes a mechanised, parachute, motorised, light and special infantry; armour and armoured reconnaissance; artillery and air defence artillery; intelligence; logistic and engineer support capabilities.[224] The review likewise commits the military to PSOs, including

[218] Shaw, "Biting the Bullet. Negotiating Democracy's Defence," 233; Mark Shaw, "Negotiating Defence for a New South Africa," in *About Turn. The Transformation of the South African Military and Intelligence*, (eds.) Jakkie Cilliers and Markus Reichardt (South Africa: Institute for Defence Policy, 1995), 16.
[219] Len Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," in *Evolutions & Revolution. A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa*, (ed.) Martin Rupiya (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2005), 256-257; Cawthra, "Security Governance in South Africa," 99; Gavin Cawthra, "Security Transformation in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments in Transitional Democracies*, (eds.) Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd, 2003), 53.
[220] DOD, "Defence Update 2005," chapter 3, (5)-(16).
[221] Cawthra, "Security Governance in South Africa," 97; Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 257; DOD, *Defence in a Democracy: White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa 1996*, chapter 5, (3).
[222] Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 257.
[223] DOD, *Defence in a Democracy: White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa 1996*, chapter 5, (8-9); Institute for Security Studies, *Submission on the South African Defence Review to the Portfolio Committee on Defence of the South African National Assembly* (South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2004), 2, http://www.issafrica.org/AF/profiles/SouthAfrica/portfcomoct04.pdf.
[224] Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 251.

peacekeeping and peace enforcement, however, fails to address these in any depth.[225] Consequently, the army's force design is "...predicated on short logistic lines for highly mechanised mobile forces prepared to fight in defence of the territorial integrity of the country and not for out-of-area force projection and support in distant places."[226]

However, a need for revision of standing policies has been recognized within the DOD. Force design is considered to be in need of adjustment in order to meet the needs of current tasks.[227] It will continue to be structured according to the core force design so as to be able to meet conventional threats, however, with an emphasis on PSOs in training, out-of-area force projection and support requirements in distant places.

3.1.2. National Security

Since 1998, a clearer understanding has emerged with regards to the security threats facing the nation, and the policy and actions required to meet these threats. A part of which is South Africa's growing prominence in PSOs on the continent.

National security in South Africa is characterized by a broad understanding of security. *Security* is understood not merely in military terms, but simultaneously recognizes non-military dimensions, with a focus on the security of people.[228] Internationally, policy objectives include the promotion of regional security in Southern Africa. Instability in the region is understood to impact negatively on neighbouring states through refugees, cross-border trafficking, disease and environmental destruction.[229] South Africa is likewise considered to share a common destiny with Southern Africa and that "Domestic [South African] peace and stability will not be achieved in a context of regional instability and poverty."[230] In turn, as South Africa's security is linked to that of its neighbours, it is in South Africa's national interest to avoid conflicts in the region.[231]

This position became integrated with the overarching foreign policy for an *African Renaissance*, the bringing of peace and prosperity to Africa through political, social and economic reform and development. The concept of *African Renaissance* informs and

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[225] Cawthra, "Security Governance in South Africa," 97.
[226] Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 261.
[227] Major General Jan Lusse, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 12 September 2005; Mosiuoa Lekota, Minister of Defence, *Budget Vote by Minister of Defence*, National Assembly, Cape Town, 8 April 2005, http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2005/05041116151001.htm.
[228] DOD, "Defence Update 2005," chapter 2, (3)-(4).
[229] DOD, *Defence in a Democracy: White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa 1996*, chapter 4, (10-11, 16 and 25).
[230] Ibid., chapter 4, (29).
[231] Department of Foreign Affairs, *White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions* (South Africa: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1999), 20, http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1999/peacemissions.pdf.

animates security policy. In turn, South Africa plays a leading role in the AU, a key arm of which is the ASF.[232] The ASF is intended to comprise five regional brigades with a capacity to operate within a variety of scenarios, including intervention and complex multidimensional missions involving low level spoilers.[233] South Africa has further played a role in the development of the SADCBRIG, the regional brigade of the ASF.

Participation in PSOs has thus become a priority of the nation's security policy, with the SANDF acquiring the responsibility of assisting in creating peace and stability in Africa through PSOs.[234] Currently, the SANDF is deployed in various PSOs on the continent, most notably in the DRC and Burundi.[235] These PSOs are largely being conducted in insurgent conflicts characterized by: weak governance; state failure; a lack of consent for PSOs; and lightly armed multiple militia or warlord groups, with no reliance on technologically advanced equipment, fighting both the government and each other, and particularly in regions where state authority has yet to be extended.[236] For example, the DRC.[237] (see Appendix B). It can further be assumed that such PSOs will be expanded as part of future missions under SADCBRIG. Given South Africa's economic and military strength within the region, the SANDF will most likely shoulder the responsibility for such operations.[238]

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[232] DOD, "Defence Update 2005," chapter 2, (18); Jakkie Cilliers and Mark Malan, "Progress with the African Standby Force," *Institute for Security Studies Paper 107* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, May 2005).

[233] Military Experts to African Chiefs of Defence Staff, *Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force and Military Staff Committee. Part I* (African Union: Addis Ababa, 12-14 May 2003), 3, http://www.iss.org.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/au/ASFPolicy1May03.pdf; African Union, *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force* (African Union: Addis Ababa, 22-23 March 2005), 1 and A-1, http://www.iss.org.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/au/asf/roadmapmar05.pdf.

[234] Garth Shelton, "The South African National Defence Force and President Mbeki's Peace and Security Agenda: New Roles and Mission," *Institute of Global Dialogue Occasional Paper No 42* (Braamfontein: Institute of Global Dialogue, March 2004), 38; Vanessa Kent and Mark Malan, "Decisions, Decisions. South Africa's Foray into Regional Peace Operations," *Institute for Security Studies Paper 72* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, April 2003), 12.

[235] The SANDF has approximately 3000 soldiers deployed at present, including in UN and AU operations in Eritrea/Ethiopia, Liberia, Uganda, Sudan and Côte D'Ivoire. Charles Nqakula, Minister for Safety and Security, *Justice, Crime Prevention & Security Cluster Media Briefing*, 5 May 2005, http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2005/05050515451001.htm; DOD, *Annual Report 2004/2005*, 34.

[236] See Institute for Security Studies, *Submission on the South African Defence Review to the Portfolio Committee on Defence of the South African National Assembly*, 8; See observations by Chief of the SA Army, General Solly Shoke in PO Dennis Ndaba, "Evaluating Our Defensive Tactics," *SA Soldier* (January 2005): 19.

[237] The DRC is considered to be the most dangerous conflict in the region, and is plagued by militia groups particularly in the Orientale and the Kivu Provinces. See United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1649 S/RES/1649 (2005)* (United Nations, 21 December 2005), http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/658/00/PDF/N0565800.pdf?OpenElement; Antoine Roger Lokongo, "Congo A Nation In Intensive Care," *New African* (February 2006): 45-46; Chris Alden and Garth Le Pere, "South Africa's Post-Apartheid Foreign Policy – from Reconciliation to Revival?" *Adelphi Paper 362* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003), 44.

[238] Theo Neethling, "Shaping the African Standby Force: Developments, Challenges and Prospects," *Military Review* 85 (May-June 2005): EBSCO electronic database; Vanessa Kent and Mark Malan, "The

However, bringing about peace in insurgent conflicts is not easy. While having been so far engaged largely in logistical activities, PSO deployments have raised questions as to whether the SANDF is in fact adequately trained and structured for the spectrum of tasks involved in such conflict environments.[239] For example, PSOs have highlighted the need for operationally minded, flexible soldiers who are technically and tactically proficient, and well versed in strategy, history, and the politics of Africa.[240] There is likewise a need for greater leadership training at a lower level of responsibility to encourage improvisation and ensure that officers have the skills to make critical decisions in volatile situations in remote areas relatively independent of direct supervision.[241] That they are able to *think beyond the battlefield* in ambiguous circumstances, from violations at checkpoints, to ambushes on patrols, to engaging in combat with warlords.[242] There is a further need for better intelligence to build a more accurate picture of the operational situation in the mission area, in order to assist the military in retaining the initiative and remain one step ahead of the likes of warlords through appropriate actions, and not simply maintain a reactive presence in the field.[243]

Thus national security policy has necessitated greater participation in PSOs, and PSOs have risen in profile as a role for the SANDF. However, given the nature of many African conflicts, this role is and will most likely be conducted in insurgent conflicts, an operational environment which is necessitating certain skills and capacities within the army, or more specifically, COIN skills and capacities.

3.1.3. Conclusion

South Africa's transition to democracy began in 1990. Negotiations with regards to the future of the military played a central role in the transition, and as a result, insurgents

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African Standby Force. Progress and Prospects," *African Security Review* 12 (2003): 79; Lindy Heinecken, "Regional Involvement: Attitudes of SANDF Officers Towards Future Military Missions," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 21 (June 1999): InfoTrac OneFile electronic database; Theo Neethling, interview by author, Saldanha, 27 July 2005.

[239] See Lindy Heinecken, "Preparing for Operations Other Than War: How Equipped is the SANDF to Deal with 'Soft Missions'?" *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 24 (June 2002): 64.

[240] Abel Esterhuyse, "Ten Years of Democracy: Education and the Rise of Professionalism in the South African National Defence Force," paper presented at the 72nd meeting of the Society of Military History, Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, Charleston, United States of America, 24-27 February 2005, 8, 16

[241] Boshoff, interview by author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005; General Jean Coulloumme-Labarthe, lecture presented at the Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 24 November 2004, http://www.issafrica.org/Seminars/2004/2411french.pdf.

[242] Heinecken, "Regional Involvement: Attitudes of SANDF Officers Towards Future Military Missions," InfoTrac OneFile electronic database; Theo Neethling, "Conducting Operations in the Realm of Peace and Security: Key Issues and Challenges in the African Context," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 14 (Summer 2003): 95 and 107.

[243] Mark Malan, "Intelligence in African Peace Operations: Addressing the Deficit," *Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre Paper 7* (Accra: KAIPTC, 7 August 2005), 3.

were integrated with former counterinsurgents to form the SANDF. However, policies and hostility towards offensive capabilities saw the military taking on a staunchly conventional approach in terms of posture, function and design. Importantly, this approach has not favoured the continuation of COIN. However, the need to meet security threats has resulted in the SANDF becoming increasingly engaged in PSOs in insurgent conflicts, with these deployments highlighting the need for COIN skills within the army. Thus, while the transition has boded poorly for COIN, increasing participation in such PSOs is necessitating an environment conducive to keeping COIN knowledge.

3.2. PRAGMATISM

The transition resulted in a break with COIN within the military. A political environment hostile to the crimes of COIN resulted in distrust of the military. The military, however, reacted pragmatically. Eager to portray itself as a professional force, the SANDF effectively turned away from COIN. It threw itself into its new role of external peace force, and did so within this anti-COIN framework. This was furthered by the new army's negative experiences alongside the police and in an intervention-styled PSO in Lesotho. Nevertheless, resources continue to be in short supply and specialist structures continue to train in COIN. However, the commandos (an internal COIN force) and deployments in support of the police are being phased out. Wider COIN training is virtually non-existent, and emerging culture ambiguous in its value of adaptability. While the military showed itself willing to adapt to democracy, it simultaneously developed a distaste for COIN.

3.2.1. *Non* Theory

From 1991, MK, a revolutionary army, re-orientated itself as a more professional force in order to better prepare for the hierarchical bureaucracy that was the SADF.[244] However, given the difference in number and the prevailing SADF leadership, integration amounted to absorption. Instead of integrating people and ideas, insurgents were merely absorbed into the bureaucracy, ensuring that SADF culture, doctrine and structures formed the basis of the SANDF.[245] However, there was a discontinuation with COIN. Associated with the abuses of Apartheid, the SADF COIN experience became taboo, and COIN considered indicative of what the new SANDF was not to reflect. Scattered with individuals who had been required to be flexible and innovative,

[244] Clearer rank structures were introduced and leaders turned to countries with a British military history for training to enhance conventional skills. Namely, Zimbabwe and India. Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 277; Shaw, 232.
[245] Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 277; Cawthra, "Security Transformation in Post-Apartheid South Africa," 41; Rocklyn Williams, "Completing the Defence Transformation Process: The Transformation of the South African Reserve Force System," *Institute for Security Studies Paper 54* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, December 2001), 7-8.

either out of necessity or because they were trained to be so, there has been no effort to capture their knowledge of insurgent and COIN warfare for future reference.[246]

The position of the SANDF is that it no longer thinks about COIN.[247] In 1994, the COIN doctrine of the military was effectively frozen. While SADF COIN manuals were reformatted into pamphlets and updated until 1998,[248] they have not been revised since, and there is no intention of doing so in the future. The reason given is that the Constitution and the Defence Act do not cater for such activities.[249] COIN is considered to be offensive and abusive, and a method of warfare conducted internally rather than possibly externally. With the lack of an insurgent threat, this has resulted in COIN being considered irrelevant to the future of the SANDF. Thus, the SANDF does not have a current COIN theory, no up to date ideas, informing principles or guidelines for conducting COIN.

That said, insurgency and COIN continue to be taught as forms of historical warfare, and are done so through courses in military history and strategy at the Military Academy. Here, insurgency is understood traditionally: a group conducts irregular warfare, including terror and sabotage, to overthrow a government. While it is a creature that comes in various forms, with changing strategies and goals, the fundamental characteristics of insurgency remain the same. Covering traditional theory, the academy considers rural and urban revolutionary guerrilla warfare, terrorism, revolution and insurgency in Africa. COIN is similarly traditionally understood, with reference to classic theorists (notably, Beaufre and McCuen), and in terms of military, political, economic, psychological actions taken to defeat insurgency.[250] Emphasis is placed on insurgency and COIN in Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia and South Africa. Insurgency in the DRC is likewise covered with the SANDF's PSOs in Africa, and the nature and challenges of such operations.[251] In this, there appears to be a theoretical link within military academia regarding a connection between insurgency, COIN and PSOs. However, this coverage is scant in comparison to that of conventional military history and strategy.[252] Moreover, relatively few graduates in fact follow careers

[246] Esterhuyse, interview by author, Cape Town, 7 July 2005.
[247] Lieutenant Colonel P.H.J. de Waal, telephone conversation with author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 9 December 2005.
[248] Boshoff, interview by author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005.
[249] Brigadier General M.V. Dlodlo, written correspondence to author from Defence Intelligence, Pretoria, 30 November 2005.
[250] See Esterhuyse, interview by author, Cape Town, 7 July 2005.
[251] Faculty of Military Science, "Military History 344 Low-Intensity Conflict in Africa since 1945," in *Faculty of Military Science Calendar 2005. Part 13* (South Africa: Stellenbosch University, 2005), 29.
[252] There are as few as two senior undergraduate courses covering these issues to any significant extent. Faculty of Military Science, "Military History 344 Low-Intensity Conflict in Africa since 1945," and

in the military.[253] Consequently, the vast majority of soldiers will not have been exposed to these concepts and ideas.

The 2002 Military Strategy likewise discusses unconventional and non-conventional onslaughts, and operations and actions to counter them as possible missions.[254] The document reflects concepts, ideas and theorists of the past, namely, *onslaught* and Beaufre.[255] Importantly, the missions-based approach discussed as part of possible revisions to defence policy has precedence in the Military Strategy.[256] All missions are required to be structured around the three strategic objectives: (i) defence against aggression; (ii) promoting security; and (iii) and supporting the people of South Africa. The first has since been rephrased as *to enhance and maintain comprehensive defence capabilities*, which amounts to defence "...against any external threat of aggression..."[257] Possible missions include:[258]

- show of force
- pre-emptive operations
  (an attack initiated on the belief that an enemy attack is imminent or under way)
- repelling conventional onslaught
- repelling unconventional onslaught
  (operations conducted against guerrilla or paramilitary groupings)
- repelling non-conventional onslaught
  (operations to curb attacks by a-national, sub-national or meta-national forces either within or outside of South Africa, for example, religious fundamentalists, warlords, pirates, or groups trafficking in illicit drugs, weapons and/or people)
- defence against biological and/or chemical onslaught
- special operations
- the protection of foreign assets

"Military Strategy 314 Contemporary Thought on Low-Intensity Conflict," in *Faculty of Military Science Calendar 2005. Part 13* (South Africa: Stellenbosch University, 2005), 29 and 33.

[253] Esterhuyse, interview by author, Cape Town, 7 July 2005.

[254] DOD, *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 2002), 5, http://www.mil.za/CSANDF/CorporateStaff/Strategy&Planning/MilStrategy.pdf.

[255] Beaufre adorns the document with an opening quote: "*The essential Military Dilemma: In effect, the most difficult military problem to resolve is that of establishing a security system, as inexpensive as possible in time of peace, capable of transforming itself very rapidly into a powerful force in case of the danger of aggression.*" André Beaufre, as quoted in DOD, *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy*, 1.

[256] DOD, *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy*.

[257] DOD, *Annual Report 2004/2005*, 6.

[258] DOD, *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy*, 4-5; Department of Defence, *Strategic Business Plan FY2005/06 to FY 2007/08* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 2005), 10, http://www.mil.za/Articles&Papers/StrategicPlan/DODstratplan05to08.pdf.

While the SANDF may not think about COIN, its key strategy document reflects and suggests a necessity for counter-guerrilla or COIN operations, including possible missions against both classic and contemporary forms of insurgency. Moreover, the second objective, has been revised to *to promote peace, security and stability in the region and on the continent*, and involves external deployment or support to enhance security. Possible missions include peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations.[259] Importantly, an emphasis is to be placed on the first objective, with the second remaining at the same intensity, and the third to decline over time. The strategy further emphasizes the need for flexibility being that the context is one characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability.[260]

The draft Defence Update likewise focuses on non-traditional security threats, non-state actors and non-conventional methods of insecurity and instability. As per the update, insecurity emanates from weak and failed states, bad governance, the politicisation of ethnicity, and the armed competition for scarce and strategic resources.[261] However, while it is recognized that policy needs to be reviewed,[262] COIN does not feature as part of a possible solution, as a means of countering guerrillas, paramilitaries, cartels or warlords. There has been no COIN theory produced to guide action in response to these threats.

Therefore, although limited and articulated in a different language and for a different purpose, there is some continuation of former COIN theory in concepts, informing theorists and the emphasis on a need for flexibility. However, without amounting to a clear doctrine for COIN, of how to counter insurgent threats whether of a classic or contemporary form. The military is thinking about COIN, however, only really on an academic historical level. While the academics may be exploring a connection between insurgency, COIN and PSOs, the connection appears to be considered insignificant to warrant a greater study or alter policy.

With regards to the development of ideas, the SANDF has become somewhat stagnant. Instead of constantly revising doctrine, the SANDF has exhibited a lack of productivity over the last few years among instructors at its various training colleges – those charged with doctrine development. It was argued by one source, that these institutions have become dumping grounds for officers who are not deployable due to

[259] DOD, *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy*, 4 and 6; Department of Defence, *Strategic Business Plan FY2005/06 to FY 2007/08*, 10; This objective likewise includes the support for military foreign relations and the defence against information onslaught.
[260] DOD, *Strategic Business Plan FY2005/06 to FY 2007/08*, 10-11.
[261] DOD, "Defence Update 2005," chapter 1, (1), (8)-(9).
[262] Ibid., (1).

HIV/AIDS. Although this claim could not be verified, if accurate, instructors have either limited or no combat or PSO experience, resulting in progressively poorer quality of training and doctrine development.[263]

3.2.2. Practice

The continuing of COIN by the SANDF has been influenced primarily by its initial negative experiences. Despite limited resources and COIN knowledge being maintained through specialist structures, wider COIN training is negligible. While the SANDF has exhibited an openness to adaptation to its new democratic environment, its value of adaptation is questionable in light of its reluctance to continue COIN.

3.2.2.1. Formative Experiences

The formative experiences of the SANDF have not proven favourable to maintaining COIN knowledge, and what might have been positive experiences in the past, are now condemned and considered to be that which must never to be repeated.

In an atmosphere distrustful of the military, the first experience of the SANDF was domestic deployment. Since before 1994, the military has been deployed internally in support of the police. Now restricted to a backup rather than a paramilitary role, these deployments persist to aid in conducting police operations on and within South Africa's borders to combat crime.[264] However, particularly in early deployments, the military was accused of heavy handedness in terms of levels of force used and abuse. Along with criticisms of having been too involved internally in the past, and the SANDF wanting to portray itself as a democratic, professional institution, the military developed a distaste for these deployments. This was furthered by the political reluctance towards the use of the military in such roles. As early as the White Paper, it was noted that these roles were unfavourable and were eventually to be phased out.[265] While the SANDF has begun to disengage from such operations, deployment is likely to continue given the insufficient capacity of the police to address crime. Importantly, the experience has been considered unfavourable by the SANDF and counter to its core business.

Second was the SANDF's external deployment into Lesotho in Operation Boleas, in September 1998. Despite achieving the goals of the mission, the SANDF's first PSO

[263] Confidential source, interview by author, 2005.
[264] Frankel, *Soldiers in a Storm. The Armed Forces in South Africa's Democratic Transition*, 159-160; For example, an average of 3000 soldiers were deployed in border control and rural protection operations continuously in 2004 alone. Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 263.
[265] DOD, *Defence in a Democracy: White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa 1996*, chapter 5, (12)-(18).

was hailed as smacking too much of SADF interventionism. The operation was launched under SADC to quash an army rebellion in Lesotho, and despite having restored stability after several days of skirmishes and looting, the operation is considered to have been plagued by tactical shortcomings, poor intelligence and communication.[266] However, the debacle had two results. (i) It prompted the writing of the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace missions. The paper assigned responsibility for participation to the Department of Foreign Affairs, aligned South African PSO principles with those of the UN, and provides for both peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions.[267] (ii) Boleas impacted on the types of PSOs the military is willing to conduct. Offensive intervention-type operations against uprisings, militias and rebels are *out*; passive, classic peacekeeping operations involving manning checkpoints and conducting patrols are *in*. Even when deployed in the former type of operation in the DRC, the SANDF has focused on the latter in terms of the activities in which it participates and the training it carries out.

Therefore, neither of these experiences favoured the maintaining of COIN knowledge. Internal policing activities, border and area protection involving COIN skills are frowned upon both within and without the SANDF, and external operations are limited to more passive COIN-like activities. Overall, pressure to transform in light of its past, has resulted in a military reluctant to dabble in offensive actions, particularly COIN actions.

3.2.2.2. Structure

In terms of insurgency and COIN, the military suffered an exodus of talent and experience. Many MK leaders opted to pursue political and commercial careers.[268] As a result key leaders did not join or soon left, their knowledge of insurgency left untapped. Many SADF personnel involved in the COIN wars are likewise no longer serving soldiers. Considered to have *blood on their hands*, many resigned leaving those involved in the later more conventional war in Angola behind.[269] Again, their knowledge of waging multiple COIN wars has not been accessed. Thus, whether SADF or MK, elites and their knowledge were lost in the transition.

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[266] Hurriedly planned and executed, SANDF personnel were too few in number and poorly prepared to respond to the unrest. Eight SANDF personnel were killed, much of Maseru was destroyed, and up to 100 civilians were either killed or injured. Shelton, "The South African National Defence Force and President Mbeki's Peace and Security Agenda: New Roles and Mission," 39-40; Roger Southall, "SADC's Intervention into Lesotho: an Illegal Defence of Democracy?" in *African Interventionist States*, (eds.) Oliver Furley and Roy May (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001), 158, 164-166; Noel Stott, "From the SADF to the SANDF: Safeguarding South Africa for a better life for all?" *Violence and Transition* 7 (2002): http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papvtp7.htm; Kent and Malan, "Decisions, Decisions, South Africa's Foray into Regional Peace Operations," 4.

[267] Department of Foreign Affairs, 6-7.

[268] Shaw, "Biting the Bullet. Negotiating Democracy's Defence," 233.

[269] Esterhuyse, interview with author, Cape Town, 7 July 2005.

The position of the military is that the SANDF no longer prepares for COIN.[270] Most of the structures that were at the forefront of COIN were disbanded during the transition. The military no longer wishes to have any part in COIN activities, and instead is focusing on its external role in Africa.[271] While there continues to be elite structures which train in COIN, COIN is not considered to be a method of warfare required generally by the SANDF.

3.2.2.2.1. Specialists

The SANDF is one force comprised of both permanent and part-time (reserve) forces. While there are some units which train in COIN, the majority of soldiers do not. Also, the SANDF is strictly a volunteer force and no longer includes conscripts.

The SANDF consists overwhelmingly of conventionally trained forces. As part of these, there exists a Rapid Deployment Force comprised of a mechanised infantry brigade, parachute brigade and special forces brigade. This force is trained to carry out specialised tasks, maintain immediate readiness and constitute the basis of a conventional, highly mobile landward defence.[272] The conventional reserves are intended to constitute the backbone of the military's capabilities, and are characterized by a "...strong regimental tradition, based on accumulated history and battle experience..."[273] The territorial forces, comprised of light infantry battalions and Area Defence Commando Units, are charged with the protection of interior assets and landward borders, and are the forces primarily involved in supporting the police.[274]

As prior to 1994, the commandos are trained in COIN, and provide the bulk of the SANDF's rear area defence "...where their knowledge of local terrain, their self-sufficiency potential, and the existence of more tightly-knit community networks renders them effective in a variety of roles."[275] With the advantage of local personnel, roles include a light infantry and guerrilla capacity, reconnaissance and tactical intelligence functions. Each commando has two sub-structures, area bound units and non-area bound units. The former gathers information and intelligence, and has a rapid response

[270] de Waal, telephone conversation with author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 9 December 2005.
[271] Ibid.
[272] DOD, *South African Defence Review 1998* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 1998), http://www.dod.mil.za/documents/defencereview/defence%20review1998.pdf, chapter 8, (20); Garth Shelton and Chris Alden, "Brave New World: The Transformation of the South African Military," *Comparative Strategy* 17 (1998): 353.
[273] Williams, "Completing the Defence Transformation Process: The Transformation of the South African Reserve Force System," 3.
[274] DOD, *South African Defence Review 1998*, chapter 8, (21).
[275] Williams, "Completing the Defence Transformation Process: The Transformation of the South African Reserve Force System," 5.

capacity. These units are divided into geographically determined cells and platoons, and are the *eyes and ears* of the commando.[276] The non-area bound units act as an auxiliary force to the police, and are not permitted to work independently of the police. Assisting the police in crime prevention operations, they act as force multipliers, and participate in manning observation posts, patrols, roadblocks, vehicle check points, and cordon-and-search operations. However, they do not have powers of apprehension or arrest, may secure roadblocks but not search vehicles, and may cordon but not search.[277] Notably, the commandos were withdrawn from urban operations in 2001, and currently operate in rural districts rather than in towns or residential areas.

Despite continued participation in these operations, the SANDF recently began to phase out the commando system, with members being incorporated within the conventional reserve force and the police reservist system. The process is intended to be completed by 2009, and is considered to be indicative of the military's reluctance to be involved in internal security and its disinterest in COIN as a task.[278] However, it is argued that this will result in a strategic gap in the force design of the SANDF, and particularly in rear area protection. Security threats to both the nation and region come from the likes of terrorism and organized crime. The commandos are designed to provide early warning and quick reaction to such threats.[279] As they stand, the commandos continue to participate in border and rural protection, while being phased out according to levels of commando activity.[280] Importantly, incorporation into the conventional reserves has been on a voluntary basis. Many members, however, have opted not to join, resulting in the capacities and skills inherent in the system being lost.

Post-1994, the light infantry capability within the army structure effectively replaced the COIN capability of the SADF. The light infantry battalions were to provide an unconventional capability within a conventional arena, and conduct unconventional actions and operations against regular and irregular forces. Such operations would include the establishment and protection of bases, protection of local civilians, search and destroy operations, urban and rural patrols, escorts, and cordon-and-search operations. While little information is available on the battalions and their operations, the provision of a need for a light infantry capability within the Military Strategy seems to have entrenched the future of the battalions and their function. That is, the strategic

[276] Jonny Steinberg, "After the Commandos. The Future of Rural Policing in South Africa," *Institute for Security Studies Monograph Series No 120* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, October 2005), 9.
[277] Ibid, 9-10.
[278] Brigadier General George Kruys (Ret.), telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 16 February 2006.
[279] Institute for Security Studies, *Submission on the South African Defence Review to the Portfolio Committee on Defence of the South African National Assembly*, 11 and 13.
[280] Steinberg, 15; Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2004/2005*, 73.

objectives are intended to be achieved through various capabilities, including, a light mobile capability involving "...personnel and matérial prepared and sustained to participate in operations where agility, flexibility and limited fire power are required..."[281]

The Special Forces Brigade likewise continues to practice COIN, and remains the backbone of the SANDF's COIN capability. While the future of the special forces was initially in doubt, the need for an operational capability in PSOs ensured their continuation.[282] At present, the brigade is faced with an increase in commitments, so much so that a contingency fund for PSOs was to be discussed at the end of 2005.[283] As it stands, the brigade is an amalgamation of the Recces. It was formally established in 1996, and includes two combat regiments: 4 Special Forces Regiment and 5 Special Forces Regiment.[284] The brigade is considered a strategic force and conducts operations internally and externally, in peace and war, in accordance with the Military Strategy.[285] It is tasked with strategic reconnaissance and intelligence collection, support to PSOs, counter-terror actions, offensive actions, combat search and rescue, and rural and urban guerrilla warfare.[286] The brigade's trademark continues to be long-term deployment of small teams over vast distances in the African bush,[287] and despite having been subject to under funding since 1994, continues to be described as one of the world's most respected units.[288] More recently, with a rise in operations, the brigade is set to see an average annual 11.8% increase in its budget,[289] indicating the need for special forces skills and their renewed profile in the African battle space.

[281] DOD, *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy*, 10.
[282] Neta C. Crawford, "South Africa's New Foreign and Military Policy: Opportunities and Constraints," *Africa Today* 42 (1995 1st/2nd Quarter): EBSCO electronic database.
[283] DOD, "Draft Strategic Business Plan, Budget Proposals and Policy Options of the Department of Defence for FY2006/07 To FY2010/11," as presented to the Defence Portfolio Committee, South Africa, 17 August 2005, chapter Five, http://www.pmg.org.za/docs/2005/050817visser.htm.
[284] The former is the descendent of 4 Recce, and the latter of 5 Recce. Notably, 1 Special Forces Regiment was retired in 1997, and its members transferred to 4 and 5 Regiments. DOD, *The South African Special Forces* (South Africa: Department of Defence), http://www.mil.za/CSANDF/CJOps/specialforcesbrigade.htm.
[285] DOD, *Annual Report 2004/2005*, 68 and 72; Department of Defence, *The South African Special Forces*, http://www.mil.za/CSANDF/CJOps/specialforcesbrigade.htm.
[286] Lamb, "From Military to Civilian Life. The Case of Retired Special Forces Operators," 43. The brigade has likewise participated in a number of joint exercises with other militaries involving anti-terror and rural guerrilla warfare. As well as SANDF exercises involving the release of hostages, the seizure and securing of airfields. DOD, *Annual Report 2004/2005*, 72; Sgt Lebohang Letaoana, "Exercise INDLOVU," *SA Soldier* (January 2006): 22-23.
[287] DOD, *The South African Special Forces*, http://www.mil.za/CSANDF/CJOps/specialforcesbrigade.htm; South African Special Forces League, "Special Forces Operations," in *South African Special Forces League* (South Africa: South African Special Forces League), http://www.recce.co.za.
[288] Mike Ryan, *The Operators* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), 29.
[289] Sam Sole, "More Men, Less Toys," *Mail & Guardian*, 17 February 2006, supplement: "Budget 2006", p.7.

Therefore, COIN is being maintained through specialist operators. However, these operators are on the decline. Yet, the need for the Special Forces Brigade has seemingly never been greater. Tasks have remained similar, and as COIN manuals were never revised, the techniques used are the same as those used by the SADF.[290]

3.2.2.2.2. Training

The increasing bureaucratization of the SANDF has hindered the promotion of innovation, flexibility, and the adapting of established knowledge. There has been progressively less COIN training to accumulate experience, develop knowledge and ensure the ability of its members to collectively apply this knowledge to new challenges.[291] Neither the tactical experience of the SADF, nor former MK members who participated in various regional insurgencies, has been used to develop the military's COIN capabilities and tactics.

Using the missions-based approach to achieve the strategic objectives, missions are intended to direct force preparation and employment during peacetime and conflict.[292] Chief of the SA Army Lieutenant General Shoke has stated that the army is in need of "...a combat ready, sustainable and flexible force that would be able to adapt to the ever-changing African battle space..."[293] However, given the lack of COIN practice, there is a disjuncture between such statements, the strategic objectives, and the training received by the army.

COIN techniques which are more generally practised, are done so as part of wider training to unit level, however, only within set scenarios rather than as an overall method of warfare, and certainly not for COIN per se.[294] For example, scenarios involving terrorists, warlords or hostage situations. Such training is not commonplace. It is only carried out when a need arises, and then only completed as part of mission-ready training prior to deployment. There is, however, an acknowledgement within the military that these skills should carry greater weight in training, and that while limited for the time being, the army is moving towards doing just that given its future roles. For this purpose, the army aims to follow a basic conventional design, yet to be *a force that can do all things,* a conventional but also flexible force.[295]

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[290] Boshoff, interview by author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005.
[291] Abel Esterhuyse, "Management and Command in the SANDF: Changing Priorities," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 26 (May 2004): 52-53.
[292] DOD, *Strategic Business Plan FY2005/06 to FY 2007/08*, 9.
[293] Lt Col Annelize Rademeyer, "Military Skills of MSD Members Tested," *SA Soldier* (January 2006): 25.
[294] Lusse, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 12 September 2005.
[295] Ibid.

There remains some COIN experience within the current infantry as many soldiers have been deployed in border protection and in support of the police.[296] However, as the SANDF withdraws from these operations, the learning of COIN skills is intended to be compensated for through skills being learned as part of PSO training.[297] This training is designed to meet the tasks required under UN and NATO peace doctrines, and outlined in preliminary draft documents of SANDF PSO doctrine (all utilised by the SANDF[298]).[299] However, despite this semblance of COIN-like training, it is considered increasingly doubtful that the SANDF is capable of countering a direct insurgency.[300] That if jihad insurgency erupted in Southern Africa, or a right-wing insurgency emerged internally, the SANDF no longer has the skills or capacities to counter such a threat.

Therefore, COIN knowledge is barely being maintained in wider training. COIN skills are intended to be compensated for in PSO training. However, this compensation is failing to take place in terms of providing the SANDF with the necessary skills to counter insurgency.

3.2.2.3. Resources

Democracy has brought new missions, tasks and roles, however, limited material and human resources continue to hinder the military's ability to meet these sufficiently. Instead, the SANDF has had to focus more generally on how to do more with less.[301]

Restrictive budgets since 1994, have eroded away the force potential and capacity of the military.[302] While the budget has been increasing slightly from R18 414 380 in 2002 to R22 459 432 in 2005, its inadequacy has hindered training, the development,

[296] Boshoff, interview by author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Brigadier General A.C. Smit, written correspondence to author from Defence Intelligence, Pretoria, 3 February 2006.
[299] These tasks include: urban and rural foot and vehicle patrols; escorts; manning observation posts, checkpoints and roadblocks; protecting humanitarian operations; support for electoral processes; maintaining and restoring law and order; conflict containment; and the enforcement of sanctions. See United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Handbook for Junior Ranks* (New York: United Nations, 1997), chapter 5; United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *General Guidelines for Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: United Nations, 1995), chapter 4; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Draft NATO Doctrine for Peace Support Operations* (Brussels: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1993), chapter 5 and chapter 9 (87); Institute for Security Studies, *Peace Support Operations. A Working Draft Manual for African Military Practitioners* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2000), chapter 5.
[300] Kruys, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 16 February 2006.
[301] See Esterhuyse, "Management and Command in the SANDF: Changing Priorities," 53.
[302] Frankel, *Soldiers in a Storm. The Armed Forces in South Africa's Democratic Transition*, 102 and 151-152.

provision and maintenance of weapons systems and other logistical equipment.[303] Provisions have likewise proven insufficient for development in line with PSOs.[304]

The Defence Review noted a need for the military to be equipped with major weapons systems.[305] The result was the strategic defence package. While the package is in line with the review, the acquisitions have favoured the air force and navy rather than the army, yet it is the army (with ageing and obsolete equipment and weapons systems) which is at the forefront of PSOs.[306] However, the army has neither made any specific demands, so whether it will be acquiring the necessary resources is likewise unclear. The package has further limited the budget to high expenditure on equipment, with the budget for force preparation and training being increasingly limited.[307] Army training is focused only on those forces being deployed externally, with regular infantry force training "...in the form of retraining of the infantry solider at a dangerously low level due to financial constraints."[308] Achievement of preparation objectives for light infantry capabilities has likewise been hampered in the limited acquisition of ammunition for main combat equipment.[309]

Limitations are equally dire with regards to human resources. The army continues to struggle with the number of soldiers it can deploy. This is accounted for by rationalization, resignations, low recruitment, and the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Rationalization aimed at restructuring and improving representivity has decimated the military in terms of numbers, skills and experience. The SANDF is a fraction of the size it once was, with many individuals having resigned. Through integration, the total number of members within the SANDF was 93 324 in 1998. By 2005/2006 this was 71 705, with the army at 31 499.[310] However, despite recruitment increasing, numbers remain low in terms of requirements for foreign deployments. In turn, there is no

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[303] Republic of South Africa, *Appropriation Act, 2002* (Cape Town: 2002), (21); Republic of South Africa, *Appropriation Act 2005* (Cape Town: 2005), (21); See Lekota, *Budget Vote by Minister of Defence* (2005), http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2005/05041116151001.htm; Heinecken, "Preparing for Operations Other Than War: How Equipped is the SANDF to Deal with 'Soft Missions'?" 87-88.

[304] Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 260. As Defence Minister Lekota stated, the "...budget of the DOD will not allow us to extend much further afield. If there is a need for further peacekeeping...the budget...will have to be reviewed." Mosiuoa Lekota, Minister of Defence, *Parliamentary Media Briefing*, 9 September 2003, http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2003/03090914461006.htm.

[305] Cawthra, "Security Governance in South Africa," 99.

[306] Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 263.

[307] Ibid.

[308] South African Army, "Core Business," in *South African Army* (South Africa: Department of Defence, 2005), http://www.army.mil.za/corebusiness/corebusiness.htm.

[309] DOD, *Annual Report 2004/2005*, 83.

[310] Le Roux, "The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation," 242; National Treasury, "Vote 21: Defence," in *Budget 2005 – National Medium Term Expenditure Estimates* (South Africa: National Treasury, 2005), 510, http://www.finance.gov.za/documents/budget/2005/ene/Vote%2021%20Defence.pdf.

system for career path development related to foreign deployments, and instead soldiers merely volunteer to be deployed abroad.

However, many within the army are neither deployable. Members inherited from the SADF and non-statutory forces are simply too old and unfit, and the high prevalency of HIV/AIDS within the army has limited the number of deployable soldiers. One source stated that infantry battalions are wrecked with HIV/AIDS,[311] and Heinecken has reported that "'...the SANDF will not be able to deploy a homogenous battalion for a UN mission requiring HIV negative personnel at short notice.'"[312] With the effect of AIDS and rising infections, the number of deployable troops will be further reduced. Policy likewise prevents commanding officers from knowing the HIV status of soldiers prior to deployment, resulting in soldiers being trained for PSOs only to be removed before deployment,[313] further straining resources available for training and preparation.

Therefore, a meagre budget incompatible with the needs and roles of the SANDF, antiquated equipment and insufficient numbers of deployable soldiers continue to hinder the army's ability to perform its tasks as per conventional methods.

3.2.2.4. Culture

The SANDF's strategic culture is comprised of several forces and cultural histories.[314] The SADF had multiple histories all exhibiting a value of adaptation. The non-statutory insurgent forces by necessity were flexible and adaptable. The combination of these forces suggests that the SANDF should value adaptability.

However, there has been a conscious moving away from the past and COIN.[315] Instead, the SANDF has focused on conventionalism, and selected discipline, loyalty, patriotism, human dignity, accountability and integrity to be valued.[316] Valued over adaptability. It has further been argued that the influence of political correctness, pacifism and a rights-based culture has required the military to conform to civilian values, and has led to a loss of a necessary aggressiveness within the military, for it to *get the job done*.[317]

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[311] Confidential source, interview by author, 2005.
[312] Heinecken, "Preparing for Operations Other Than War: How Equipped is the SANDF to Deal with 'Soft Missions'?" 72.
[313] Ibid., 84-86.
[314] Brigadier General George Kruys (Ret.), "Some Major Factors Influencing Military Efficiency in the South African National Defence Force," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 26 (May 2004): 7.
[315] Esterhuyse, interview with author, Cape Town, 7 July 2005.
[316] Lindy Heinecken, Lt Richard Gueli and Ariane Neethling, "Defence, Democracy and South Africa's Civil-Military Gap," *Scientia Militaria South African Journal of Military Studies* 33 (2005): 132.
[317] Ibid., 133-134; Confidential source, interview by author, 2005.

However, in this the SANDF has arguably been at its most adaptable, in its adapting to new political circumstances during the transition. Problematically though, needs arising from PSOs are necessitating the revaluing of adaptability given the nature of the task. As such, instead of a loss of value of adaptability, there is rather a lack of willingness to adapt with regards to COIN and COIN-related tasks, and largely so given domestic and regional attitudes towards the SA military.

Therefore, how well adaptability survived the transition is unclear. On one level it has seemingly been replaced, on the other it has survived too well. The military initially adapted to new political circumstances and has since become either entrenched or unwilling to adapt further in terms of COIN. Either way, at the core seems to be the SANDF's determination not to be seen as the juggernaut that it was during Apartheid.

3.2.3. Conclusion

There has been a discontinuation with COIN within the SANDF. While there remain specialists which continue to practice COIN, wider training is virtually nil. Practice has continued to inform theory, and as such, there is no current COIN theory. Despite a lack of resources and an increasing involvement in PSOs, there is a reluctance to refer to COIN, and largely due to negative experiences in the wake of the transition. Specifically, unpopular internal policing operations and the widely criticized Operation Boleas. Moreover, while the military exhibited a willingness to adapt to democracy, it is seemingly now unwilling to adapt to the ways and means for which it was condemned in the past, regardless of how unpragmatic this may be given its new tasks.

3.3. CONCLUSION

At first glance, the SANDF is in an enviable position in terms of COIN. It is a military comprised of former counterinsurgents, conventional soldiers and insurgents, all of whom could contribute to conceptualizing insurgency and COIN in a dynamic and integrated way, making the SANDF uniquely knowledgeable and skilled to combat insurgency. However, there has been no fusion of knowledge. Rather there has been a veritable fission within the SANDF with COIN.

The political environment was defined by the transition, an environment intolerant of COIN. Through the negotiations a new military was created: statutory and non-statutory forces were integrated; and changes were made to the military's posture, function and force design. In light of abuses committed by the SADF during Apartheid, the SANDF adopted a staunchly conventional stance. Unfortunately, this stance does not cater for

the strategic environment in which South Africa now finds itself, and neither for the role that the military is now playing in regional security. It is considered to be in South Africa's security interests to ensure peace and stability in the region, and the SANDF a key functionary in realizing this through participating in PSOs. These operations are increasingly set in insurgent conflicts, and have given rise to the need for COIN skills and capabilities. However, the political environment has yet to prove conducive to maintaining COIN knowledge.

Overall, the SANDF has been relatively pragmatic, however, not in relation to COIN. Theory has been shelved. Formative experiences in domestic deployments and an intervention-styled PSO in Lesotho were unpopular and considered negative by the SANDF. However, these experiences determined the kinds of operations in which the military is willing to engage. The SANDF does not want to be involved in internal deployments, and is not interested in COIN as a task,[318] albeit directly or as part of PSOs in insurgent conflicts. While several specialist structures survived the transition, the commando system, is being phased out, as are internal deployments in support of the police. Moreover, while the military may not have lost its value of adaptability, it appears to have lost its willingness to adapt to new conditions in light of past condemnations regarding its use of COIN warfare.

Therefore, the SA military has kept its COIN knowledge to a limited extent through remaining specialists. However, wider training is insignificant. Whether this will alter in any way given the changing political environment from one focused on transition to one ever more focused on meeting security interests and conducting PSOs, is uncertain. However, given the SANDF's strategic objectives, recognized security threats, ever pressing resource and skills-based needs, as well as calls from within for greater flexibility, it is unclear as to how long this status quo can and will remain.

[318] Kruys, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 16 February 2006.

CHAPTER FOUR: COMMENT & PERSPECTIVE

This chapter will consider the learning and continuing of COIN, and the SA military in perspective. Specifically, it will begin by considering the importance of continuing COIN in terms of PSOs. This will be followed by a more in-depth analysis of the case of the SA military and its reluctance towards future COIN.

4.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING COIN: PSOS

British General Sir Michael Rose stated that "...'If you want to be a good peacekeeper, first be a good war fighter,'..."[319] However, while conventional training provides basic war-fighting skills and promotes professionalism, technical expertise, and non-partisanship, the demands of PSO environments in insurgent conflicts are such that a modern military must simultaneously exhibit the flexibility of an unconventional COIN force. Conventional war-fighting skills may indeed be the fundamentals for any soldier. However, to operate in an insurgency, a soldier needs COIN war-fighting skills. In this, a military is best prepared for contemporary conflict, from fighting insurgents in Iraq to enforcing peace in the DRC. As such, this author would refine General Rose's statement to: if you want to be a good peace soldier, first be a good COIN war fighter.

Beyond insurgency being the most predominant form of warfare used in the contemporary world, COIN knowledge is useful to keep as it is transferable and can be applied in other contexts, namely PSOs.

PSOs in insurgent conflicts are most certainly not COIN operations. However, the various tactics and techniques required are essentially the same. Whereas COIN is an offensive method of war-fighting; PSOs aim to contain and stabilize conflict, enable and restore peace. However, tactically they are the same.[320] Albeit manning roadblocks or applying force with surgical delicacy to secure an area in which combatants are indistinguishable from civilians – if a military can do these as part of COIN, it has the necessary skills to conduct PSOs, from observing elections to forcibly securing territory. Patterns of conducting COIN even replicate themselves in PSOs. For example, British forces tend to take on a policing role and employ minimum force.[321] In

[319] As quoted in Tony Clayton, "African Military Capabilities in Insurrection, Intervention and Peace Support Operations," in *African Interventionist States*, (eds.) Oliver Furley and Roy May (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001), 59.

[320] Strawbridge, conversation with author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005; Boshoff, interview by author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005; See United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *General Guidelines for Peacekeeping Operations*, chapter 1.

[321] For example, in Sierra Leone, force used was highly targeted, carefully applied, and employed low-firepower individual weapons so as to limit civilian casualties. Rod Thornton, "The British Army and the Origins of its Minimum Force Philosophy," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 15 (Spring 2004): 83.

contrast, US forces tend to employ maximum force indiscriminately.[322] Consequently, those militaries that have faired well in learning COIN are well suited to conducting PSOs in insurgent conflicts.[323]

Contemporary insurgency will continue to trigger PSOs, as in Sierra Leone and the DRC. These PSOs are likewise increasingly being assigned mandates under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, allowing for peace enforcement. Peace enforcement operations are those most akin to COIN. While peacekeeping missions under Chapter VI are considered increasingly unlikely to occur,[324] peace soldiers are being required to perform a wide range of COIN-like functions to meet the requirements of Chapter VII mandates: to observe elections; man roadblocks; conduct rural and urban patrols; forcibly secure territory; and engage in combat with militias. Failure to provide for which in terms of skills and training will result in mission failure.[325]

Importantly, PSO training is no substitute for COIN training. While COIN knowledge may be transferable and able to be applied in different contexts, PSO training, however close to COIN but without a COIN background, is COIN out of context. It fails to foster and entrench the same institutional features and is not transferable to a direct encounter with insurgency. Instead, like any art, one must first master the basics before applying what you have learned in new ways. As such, despite basic COIN-type skills being able to be learned under the guise of *PSO training*, it remains important to train in COIN in its own right.

4.2. THE SA MILITARY & COIN

Participation in PSOs in insurgent conflicts is necessitating a revival of COIN by virtue of the nature of the task and the emerging operational needs within the SANDF. Nevertheless, the SANDF remains entrenched in its anti-COIN position. As such, there exists a disjuncture between this position and the needs of the African battle space, what the army is doing to meet these needs in terms of training, the military's strategic objectives, and the country's security policy goals.

4.2.1. Pragmatism & PSOs

COIN is an essential war-fighting skill in contemporary conflict and forms the basis of PSO training. While present experiences are not identical to those of the past, they are

[322] For example in Somalia. Ibid., 84.
[323] Nagl, "Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife. British and American Army Counterinsurgency Learning During the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War," 196-197.
[324] Brigadier Vere Hayes, *Occasional Paper: Establishing the Credibility of a Regional Peacekeeping Capability* (South Africa: ACCORD, 2000), 2 and 4.
[325] Ibid., 11.

neither radically different. In the past, the military countered multiple insurgent groups, in urban and rural areas, where combatants were indistinguishable from civilians, in various geographical terrains. In PSOs in insurgent conflicts, the SANDF face multiple insurgent groups, in urban and rural areas, where combatants are indistinguishable from civilians, in a variety of geographical areas. The army has, however, decided that conventional war-fighting should be the basis of force preparation, and will enable the army "...to defend itself during peace missions and perform peace enforcement..."[326] Being that the army no longer widely trains in COIN, and has been criticised by the UN for lacking necessary knowledge in its current PSOs,[327] it is questionable as to whether the army is learning the appropriate skills for the conflicts in which it is being deployed.

As it stands, troops are given as little as six weeks training prior to deployment in peace techniques. It is considered that otherwise conventionally trained soldiers require only these six weeks to *get their heads round* PSOs, and then are adequately prepared to be deployed in the likes of the DRC.[328] The SANDF, moreover, has not yet engaged in peace enforcement. The White Paper, the Defence Review and the Military Strategy all provide for peace enforcement, and both deployments in the DRC and Burundi are under peace enforcement mandates, yet the army trains largely only for peacekeeping.[329] In turn, the military is prepared to meet only mild challenges where there is a peace to keep, to man checkpoints, carry out patrols, and use minimum force.[330] The army is likewise used only in peacekeeping activities despite being deployed under enforcement mandates. For example, in the DRC, where it is deployed in the Kivu region, the hottest zone of the conflict.[331] The position of the SANDF is that it does not train for peace enforcement to any great extent. It will do so only when the

[326] Col E.F. Drost and Capt E. Jordaan, "The SA Army Vision 2020," *SA Soldier* (June 2005): 39.
[327] Henri Boshoff, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 12 December 2005; See Erika Gibson, "Dissipline in SA mag kwel VN," *Beeld*, 8 November 2005, p. 10.
[328] Lusse, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 12 September 2005.
[329] Peacekeeping includes monitoring and assisting in the implementation of agreements, with the consent of the belligerent parties, without the use of force, as per Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Peace enforcement includes activities outlined by Chapter VII, involves the use of force to maintain or restore peace where peace is threatened, a breach of peace or act of aggression takes place. DOD, *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy*, 6; As per MONUC and ONUB, United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1635 S/RES/1635 (2005)* (United Nations, 28 October 2005), http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/577/42/PDF/N0557742.pdf?OpenElement; United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1650 S/RES/1650 (2005)* (United Nations, 21 December 2005), http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/658/48/PDF/N0565848.pdf?OpenElement. The SANDF has approximately 3000 soldiers deployed at present, including in UN and AU operations in Eritrea/Ethiopia, Liberia, Uganda, Sudan and Côte D'Ivoire. Charles Nqakula, Minister for Safety and Security, *Justice, Crime Prevention & Security Cluster Media Briefing*, 5 May 2005, http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2005/05050515451001.htm; DOD, *Annual Report 2004/2005*, 34.
[330] Neethling, interview by author, Saldanha, 27 July 2005; Mark Malan, William Nhara and Pol Bergevin, "Appendix G: Training for Peace Operations As Conducted in South Africa," in *Monograph No. 17 African Capabilities for Training For Peace Operations* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, November 1997), http://www.issafrica.org/Pubs/Monographs/No17/AppG.html.
[331] Neethling, interview by author, Saldanha, 27 July 2005; Boshoff, interview by author, Pretoria, 30 August 2005.

need arises, and when they do, old COIN training manuals are indeed used.[332] In this, it would appear that the reluctance towards COIN has carried over to peace enforcement.

While the SANDF is not used in peace enforcement actions in the DRC, other MONUC forces are conducting joint operations against warlords in the east of the country, operations which are "...more akin to rural counterinsurgency operations than peacekeeping."[333] In such peace enforcement operations the required skills, tactics, equipment, resources, and training are the same as those required for COIN war-fighting. The capabilities required by forces are the same as those faced by any forces taking on an insurgency. In turn, Malan has argued that the former SADF COIN manuals may indeed be better suited for the likes of the DRC.[334]

The SANDF considers its task to be that of an external peace force in Africa. However, the SANDF only participates in classic peacekeeping functions in PSOs, and despite a severe lack of resources, relies on conventional war-fighting skills to prepare troops for deployment. Problematically, SANDF's reluctance towards COIN has carried over to peace enforcement operations, further hindering training and preparation for the operational environment in which the SANDF is being deployed.

4.2.2. Politics & Pragmatism: Fear of the Juggernaut

Upon integration, the SANDF was poised to become a thoroughly unique military force. One comprised of former insurgents and counterinsurgents, and during a time which was ideal for an integration of knowledge. Such a fusion of the creative approaches of insurgents and COIN soldiers presented the opportunity to draw on the best of what all had to offer and enhance methods and tactics within insurgent environments. However, instead the military turned away from COIN within a political environment hostile to both past COIN and COIN as a method of warfare to be used by the military.

The SANDF no longer conducts COIN, and much to their credit members hope that they will never have to practice COIN internally ever again.[335] However, while undoubtedly illegitimate, the SADF's COIN experience was rich and diverse, as was MK's insurgent experience. Together these experiences of both sides of the same kind of warfare present a unique, multi-faceted resource which can be used to meet current

[332] de Waal, telephone conversation with author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 9 December 2005; Lieutenant Colonel P.H.J. de Waal, telephone conversation with author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 16 January 2006.
[333] Malan, "Intelligence in African Peace Operations: Addressing the Deficit," 23.
[334] Mark Malan, email correspondence with author, Cape Town/Accra, 16 August 2005.
[335] de Waal, telephone conversation with author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 9 December 2005.

military objectives. However, this has failed to take place due to the unfavourable political environment. The military's natural, historical pragmatism towards COIN has become intimately linked to this environment. It refuses to be in a position in which it will be labelled as imitating past actions, and appears to prefer being criticised for failing to meet tasks which require COIN skills. The SANDF will continue to turn from COIN as long as the political climate persists. Unfortunately, this misappropriated pragmatism is hamstringing the military in its ability to fulfil its tasks.

Political disfavour is rooted in the overwhelming illegitimacy of the military's COIN wars. It informs a deep-set suspicion and fear of the military becoming the juggernaut of the past. Unlike other COIN forces associated with abuses in foreign far-flung places, many of the military's abuses were committed internally. The military was unable to merely withdraw, sail away, and the nation forget the encounter. The experience thus continues to define wider opinion of COIN, and the activities and training the SANDF conducts. Problematically, the military's tasks and objectives, and the country's security policy require the opposite. Instead, there exists a gap between what the SANDF is trained for, what is considered acceptable for the SANDF to do, and what the SANDF is being expected to achieve in terms of policy.[336] Rather, there needs to be a reconciliation of sorts within the political environment regarding the security challenges faced by the nation, the tasks that must be carried out to meet those challenges, and the training which is needed to carry out those tasks effectively.

This is most pertinent in terms of PSOs. The SANDF is charged with aiding in creating security and stability in the region. Proposed missions under the ASF cater for operations in conflict scenarios involving warlords, scenarios which are understood to require Chapter VII mandates.[337] Given the SANDF's future role in SADCBRIG and these conflict environments which need stabilizing, military force will most likely have to be used to enforce peace.[338] However, the SANDF is not trained in the skills by which to fulfil this task, and the use of force to merely keep peace persists in featuring prominently on the operational agenda.[339] The DOD's position is that the army has embraced a learn by doing ethic to develop PSO skills on the ground using experience

[336] Heinecken, Gueli and Neethling, "Defence, Democracy and South Africa's Civil-Military Gap," 134-137.
[337] African Union, *African Standby Force (ASF): Concept Paper. Part II: Annexes* (African Union: Addis Ababa, April 2003), 1A-4 and 1A-5, http://www.iss.org.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/au/ASFAnnexApr03.pdf.
[338] Kent and Malan, "Decisions, Decisions. South Africa's Foray into Regional Peace Operations," 13.
[339] Esterhuyse, "Management and Command in the SANDF: Changing Priorities," 40; Esterhuyse, "Ten Years of Democracy: Education and the Rise of Professionalism in the South African National Defence Force," 22.

acquired so far.[340] However, the SANDF has already been criticized by UN officials for using PSOs as training missions.[341]

Adaptation regarding COIN occurs only when institutional leaders agree that it is in the long term interests for that institution to do so.[342] However, while Nagl has argued in relation to a military effecting change to be able to learn COIN where it otherwise has been unable to do so, leaders within the SANDF do not have to choose to embrace something with which it has previously failed. Instead, leaders need to choose to maintain something with which they previously had deadly success. This success is held in moral contempt by society, and whether out of moral shame or corporate savvy, the military has buried its COIN past. There exists a *the past is the past and that's just not we do anymore* attitude within the DOD. As such it is how DOD leaders remember the past, perceive and approach their new mission and role that will determine whether they decide to prepare to meet this insurgent challenge.[343]

Thus, a hostile political environment towards COIN is proving problematic for meeting PSO commitments and security challenges. There is simply no role for a SANDF in Africa which is unable to engage with insurgents and forcibly secure an area. If the SANDF is deployed as part of a UN or AU peace enforcement mission, it needs to have the capacity to be so deployed. Importantly, using COIN will not legitimate Apartheid's COIN campaign. The military has an unredeemable past, however, this need not necessitate an incompetent future. While trying to escape the past, it has stumbled into the present unprepared for the context and role in which it now finds itself. If the SANDF is to perform effectively in PSOs, the military to meet its objectives and the nation its policy goals, the SANDF has to be willing to adapt appropriately with COIN, and to feel that is sanctioned to do so. Instead of considering COIN as untouchable, it needs to be looked upon as something which South Africa can and must use. If not, any deployments in insurgent conflicts will be disastrous.

4.2.3. COIN Past, Present & Future

Despite the illegitimacy of the SA military's COIN experience, Rocky Williams argued that the SANDF ought to maintain "...a deterrence capability predicated on a mixture of conventional and non-conventional capabilities with a greater reliance on the guerrilla

[340] Lusse, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 12 September 2005; Lekota, *Budget Vote by Minister of Defence* (2004), http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2004/04060909151001.htm
[341] Boshoff, telephonic interview by author, Cape Town/Pretoria, 12 December 2005; Gibson, "Dissipline in SA mag kwel VN," p. 10.
[342] Nagl, "Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife. British and American Army Counterinsurgency Learning During the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War," 195 and 197.
[343] Ibid., 196.

traditions that all South Africans have used with great efficacy throughout the country's history."[344] Given the resources available, the external role envisioned for the military, and the strategic environment, this would be a most pragmatic course of action by which to meet the SANDF's strategic objectives and to successfully conduct its missions. COIN training would aid in preparing the army for all matter of conflict, geographic and cultural environments, fostering flexibility and adaptability, and to be effective when deployed over vast distances with few resources.

It is within the military strategy that missions to defend the nation include meeting unconventional and non-conventional threats, involving guerrillas, paramilitaries and warlords. Thus, to defend the territorial sovereignty of the nation and to the enhance the capabilities to do so, war-fighting skills need to include COIN war-fighting skills. The army must be able to escalate and de-escalate its actions according to changing conditions within an insurgent environment. COIN training ensures the ability to escalate and deescalate actions *appropriately* so as to successfully meet a guerrilla, warlord or paramilitary challenge.

Having a greater COIN capability will likewise have a positive effect on the SANDF's capacity to meet its other objectives more successfully. There exists no direct insurgent threat to South Africa, however, the SANDF will continue to contend with insurgency when deployed in PSOs. Deployments in far away places with little resources in an insurgent conflict, requires certain features and skills within a military if it is to be effective. Leading members within the SANDF cite the need for such features and capacities in order to meet the strategic environment that is the African battle space.[345] However, these features and capacities are only fostered through COIN training, creating a military imbued with adaptability and flexibility, better leadership skills at lower levels of responsibility, and greater efficiency in a variety of tasks, from war fighting to peacekeeping, from engaging in combat in insurgent conflicts to enforcing peace in those same conflicts.

To meet the needs of PSOs, the SANDF's force designed around purely conventional equipment; operations close to one's borders; and relative proximity of support structures; needs to be expanded to include that required by protracted deployments over vast distances; long range logistic support; flexibility in different geographic environments; high mobility, air and sea transportability; and a greater reliance on light

[344] Williams, "How Primary is the Primary Function? Configuring the SANDF for Africana Realities," http://www.iss.org.za/Pubs/ASR/8No6/HowPrimary.html.
[345] See Ndaba, "Evaluating Our Defensive Tactics," 19.

infantry contingents supported by special forces.[346] These needs and the few resources by which they must be completed, would likewise be met through COIN orientated training and capabilities.[347]

Developing COIN from the past will best prepare the SANDF for both its current and future deployments, whether in defence of the nation, PSOs or in support of the police. This will not entail a reversal of conventionalism but rather broaden war-fighting skills and capabilities within the SANDF to meet its objectives and the needs of its missions. Future COIN tasks by the SANDF are unavoidable, as are the alterations required to meet these tasks. Keeping COIN is thus undeniably in the best long-term interests of the SA military.

4.2.4. Conclusion

Increasing participation in PSOs in insurgent conflicts is creating a need to resurrect COIN knowledge. However, the SANDF remains steadfast in its anti-COIN stance. This position is intrinsically connected to an unfavourable political environment. An environment defined by a deep and widely held suspicion of the military and COIN as a result of the military's abusive COIN past. This anti-COIN sentiment both within and without the military is increasingly out of step with nation's security policy goals and the means necessary to achieve them. However, given these goals and the military's tasks, strategic objectives and available resources, COIN is seemingly unavoidable.

4.3. CONCLUSION

COIN is a transferable skill, most notably with respect to PSOs in insurgent conflicts. While different entities altogether, such PSOs require the same tactics and techniques as COIN. However, PSO training is not a substitute for COIN training, and COIN should be continued in its own right. More importantly, given the prevalency of insurgency and the nature of contemporary conflict environments, albeit direct COIN encounters or PSOs, conventional war-fighting skills are insufficient as preparation for deployment

[346] See Major General L. N. Le Roux, "A Determination of the South African Defence Requirements: A Vision for 2015 and Beyond," paper presented at the Africa Defence 2000 Summit, Gallagher Estate, Midrand, South Africa, 14 August 2000, http://www.mil.za/Articles&Papers/Papers/a_determination_of_south_african.htm; Rocky Williams, "Defence in a Democracy: The South African Defence Review and the Redefinition of the Parameters of the National Defence Debate," in *Ourselves to Know. Civil-Military Relations and Defence Transformation in Southern Africa*, (eds.) Rocky Williams, Gavin Cawthra and Diane Abrahams (South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2003), 219.

[347] Importantly, this incorporation would neither overturn existing structures. There remains a large degree of flexibility in the current force design, and with some existing compatibility, the military need only adapt its use of existing resources. Institute for Security Studies, *Submission on the South African Defence Review to the Portfolio Committee on Defence of the South African National Assembly,* 14-15.

into these environments. In order to be effective, militaries need COIN war-fighting skills.

Problematically, the SA military, as an institution, is not recognizing the connection between PSOs and COIN. A need for wider COIN training has arisen in the SANDF's participation in PSOs in insurgent conflicts. Given the mandates under which it is and will be deployed, current PSO training is grossly insufficient. If the military is to be at all effective in these operations, it will have to include peace enforcement training and practice. However, the SANDF has distanced itself from peace enforcement activities given their resemblance to COIN. In order to fulfil its role in bringing greater peace and stability to Africa, fulfil wider security policy goals, and be effective in its tasks, the SANDF needs to reactivate COIN.

However, the military's involvement in COIN in the past, the subsequent condemnation thereof, and the need for the military to be seen as a benign force within society, resulted in an unwillingness to conduct COIN within the military. Such was the impact of the transition on the military, that a method of warfare so dominant in its institutional experience was set on a path to be forgotten. This position is intimately linked with the political environment, which thus so far persisted in being anti-COIN. Despite an increasing emphasis placed on PSOs within security policy and the wider security context, it is unlikely that the SANDF will incorporate greater COIN as long as the political environment continues to sanction against it. In turn, there needs to be a reconciling of the past with the needs of the present within the political environment, so as to enable the military to approach and conduct its tasks effectively.

However, ultimately, whether the military continues COIN will only be decided by the institution's leaders. This decision is as crucial for the continuation of COIN in a military with an illegitimate history with COIN, as is the decision to learn COIN when a military has no previous COIN history.

Yet, COIN tasks cannot be avoided, and neither can the skills and capabilities required to carry out these tasks. Albeit defending the nation or PSOs, the nature of the military's strategic objectives and the missions associated with them, necessitate certain skills and capabilities – skills and capabilities which are acquired through COIN training. Importantly, these objectives and missions are determined by the strategic environment. They cannot be ignored or sidestepped. Therefore, instead of trying to continue to fumble along in PSOs, the decision needs to be made to embrace a

pragmatism with regards to fulfilling the respective task given the available resources and similar past experiences.

CONCLUSION

Learning and keeping COIN knowledge is like learning to eat soup with a knife: it is messy, difficult, and particular.[348] Not all militaries are able to learn COIN. Those that are, are few in number. COIN knowledge cannot be learned merely from books, but relies on very specific circumstances, circumstances which are now perhaps lost to a previous age. Those few that have been able to learn need to keep that knowledge. However, keeping COIN can prove problematic when its previous use was associated with abuse. As in the South African case, this can cause a military to discontinue COIN, and to do so regardless of its operational needs.

(i) Learning & Keeping COIN

Insurgency is a type of unconventional warfare which uses irregular methods and tactics. The fight is characterized by rural action, urban uprising and rebellion, to overthrow a government in what becomes a guerrilla war. Traditionally this amounts to an asymmetric conflict against a superior military force. Importantly, insurgency has endured as a method of warfare from the earliest times, and remains prominent in weak and failed state systems in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

COIN is the method of warfare used to put down insurgency. However, learning COIN successfully is not straightforward. It is dependent on a conducive political environment to learning COIN and pragmatism within a military. Such a political environment is one in which there is a crisis of legitimacy in a colonial or minority-rule context, and pragmatism is a military's preference to rely on practice rather than theory.

While there is a place for theory or doctrine in COIN, theory must be applied discerningly according to the specific circumstances of the specific conflict. Importantly, there is no definitive how-to COIN theory, and a sure sign of failure is when a military attempts to apply a set theory in a COIN campaign. Instead, practitioners must take what they know from theory and adapt both it and themselves to the given situation. A reliance on practice is further rooted in: (i) formative experiences against insurgency; (ii) decentralized structures in which there is an emphasis on flexibility; (iii) access to few material and human resources necessitating innovativeness and the use of local peoples; and (iv) a culture which values adaptability. Central to learning COIN is, therefore, a military's ability to use what it has learned and experienced in the past – including its mistakes – and given the availability of resources, through a decentralized structure, apply itself to a particular situation.

[348] Lawrence, 182.

COIN knowledge is best conserved in theory or doctrine, training programmes, and elites who specialize in COIN. However, not all militaries are able to learn COIN. Those who have, need to keep it at all costs. Not only is it important to know given that insurgency is the most prominent form of conflict in the world today, but once learned, this knowledge can be kept and applied to different scenarios and types of insurgency in different settings and for different purposes. COIN knowledge is not merely about tactics, but is simultaneously about the features which it fosters within a military: adaptability, flexibility and innovativeness. These are essential to be able to defeat any type of insurgency in any type of context, albeit a direct insurgency or a PSO in an insurgent conflict. As such, if a military is going to be a good and effective peace force, it must first be a good and effective COIN war force.

(ii) The SA military & COIN

Having successfully learned COIN during the 1970s and 1980s, keeping COIN post 1990 has proven as messy as learning it in the first place. The shadow of the juggernaut that was the SADF continues to hinder the new SANDF.

During the years of the COIN wars, there existed a suitable political environment in which the army was able to learn COIN. A crisis of legitimacy emerged from the 1960s in simultaneous, multiple insurgencies against the white minority-ruled state. This crisis came to be seen as a *total onslaught* by the state, and the army the leading means by which to suppress it. The *onslaught* came from within and beyond the borders of South Africa, and was led primarily by the ANC in South Africa, and SWAPO in Namibia. While the latter was a more rural guerrilla struggle, the internal insurgency exhibited a combination of rural guerrilla action and urban uprising. Both the insurgencies and SADF COIN actions spilled over into neighbouring states, particularly Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

The SADF was pragmatic in its approach. While developing and revising theory, it was largely discounted or at best applied selectively given local circumstances. Practice was considered more important, and was determined by formative COIN experiences especially in Namibia. There was an emphasis on COIN within the army in terms of training, and most significant were the decentralized units which specialized in COIN. The SADF likewise made do with few human resources, which resulted in the army embracing the imperial COIN approach. It established indigenous forces, recruited displaced COIN specialists, and used proxy forces to fight and create insurgency to eliminate their insurgent enemies. Rooted in the irregular commando and British colonial traditions, the SADF likewise exhibited a culture well open to adaptability.

However, the political environment of the transition was not one favourable for the keeping of this knowledge. The military was condemned for its COIN wars and the abuses it committed as part of those wars. The negotiations and policies decided upon during the transition saw the military taking on a staunchly conventional posture and a retracting attitude towards COIN as it aimed to be seen as a benign, professional force. However, while well-intentioned at the time, this stance is proving increasingly out of step with the new strategic and operational environment in which the army now finds itself. Problematically, new security threats and the need to bring peace and stability to the region has resulted in the SANDF becoming increasingly involved in PSOs in insurgent conflicts. The SANDF's strategic objectives further include the defence of the nation against any external threats of aggression and the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. These require the SANDF to be able to engage in missions to counter guerrillas, warlords and paramilitaries, as well as in peace enforcement operations. However, the SANDF no longer practices COIN to a significant degree. There exists no COIN theory, wider training is negligible, and while a number of specialist structures continue to train in COIN, others are being eliminated.

Despite an apparent change in the political environment to one more pro-PSO (and potentially more pro-COIN), and despite material and human resources being desperately few due to limited budgets and the prevalency of HIV/AIDS, the SANDF remains reluctant to embrace COIN to meet its needs. In this it is both pragmatic and unpragmatic. It pragmatically adapted to democracy, and is now unwilling to dabble in COIN again given the hot water in which it has found itself for doing so in the past. However, by virtue of the nature of its new tasks, the SANDF is proving decidedly unpragmatic in its unwillingness to adapt to its new circumstances and role appropriately. As such, the SANDF trains and participates only in classic peacekeeping activities in its current PSOs, regardless of criticisms, failings in performance, and the peace enforcement mandates under which it is deployed. The SANDF is simply unwilling to engage in COIN and COIN-like activities, and has set itself on a path to forget its COIN knowledge. Such was the impact of the transition to democracy on the SA military. It fundamentally altered the military's perception of COIN, the dominant form of warfare in its institutional experience. This alteration has resulted in the SANDF being poorly prepared for both its present and future tasks.

However, only SANDF leaders can make the decision to revive COIN. There may not be a direct insurgent threat against the South African state, however, given the tasks of the SANDF, the nature of the conflict environment in which it is most likely to be

deployed, calls for greater flexibility, its role in regional security structures, the need to meet wider security goals, and its own strategic objectives and associated missions, it is difficult to see how the SANDF can with any reason maintain its anti-COIN stance. Only COIN training fosters features like flexibility and innovativeness within the make-up of a military, and provides the necessary context of understanding for learning COIN skills and techniques, skills and techniques required of any military force in an insurgent conflict, albeit a peace force or COIN force.

Pragmatism within the SANDF is being hindered by a disparity within the political environment. There is a lingering distrust of the military both within South Africa and the region. However, tasks tend to remain the same, regardless of time and transition. Whether the SANDF continues COIN is not a question of moral-historical should or should not, but an issue of need today. The SANDF needs to train in COIN so as to meet its needs in PSOs, to meet its strategic objectives, to meet guerrilla, warlord and paramilitary challenges, to be able to fulfil its role in regional security structures, and to aid in bringing peace to a region too long torn apart by war.

Consequently, political and military leaders alike need to reconcile the political environment and pragmatism within the military, to decide to do what is necessary to attain policy goals and to be effective in military tasks given the resources available. Leaders need to decide to continue, develop and revise COIN, and in turn, recognize the connection between COIN and the PSOs in which the military is most likely to be deployed.

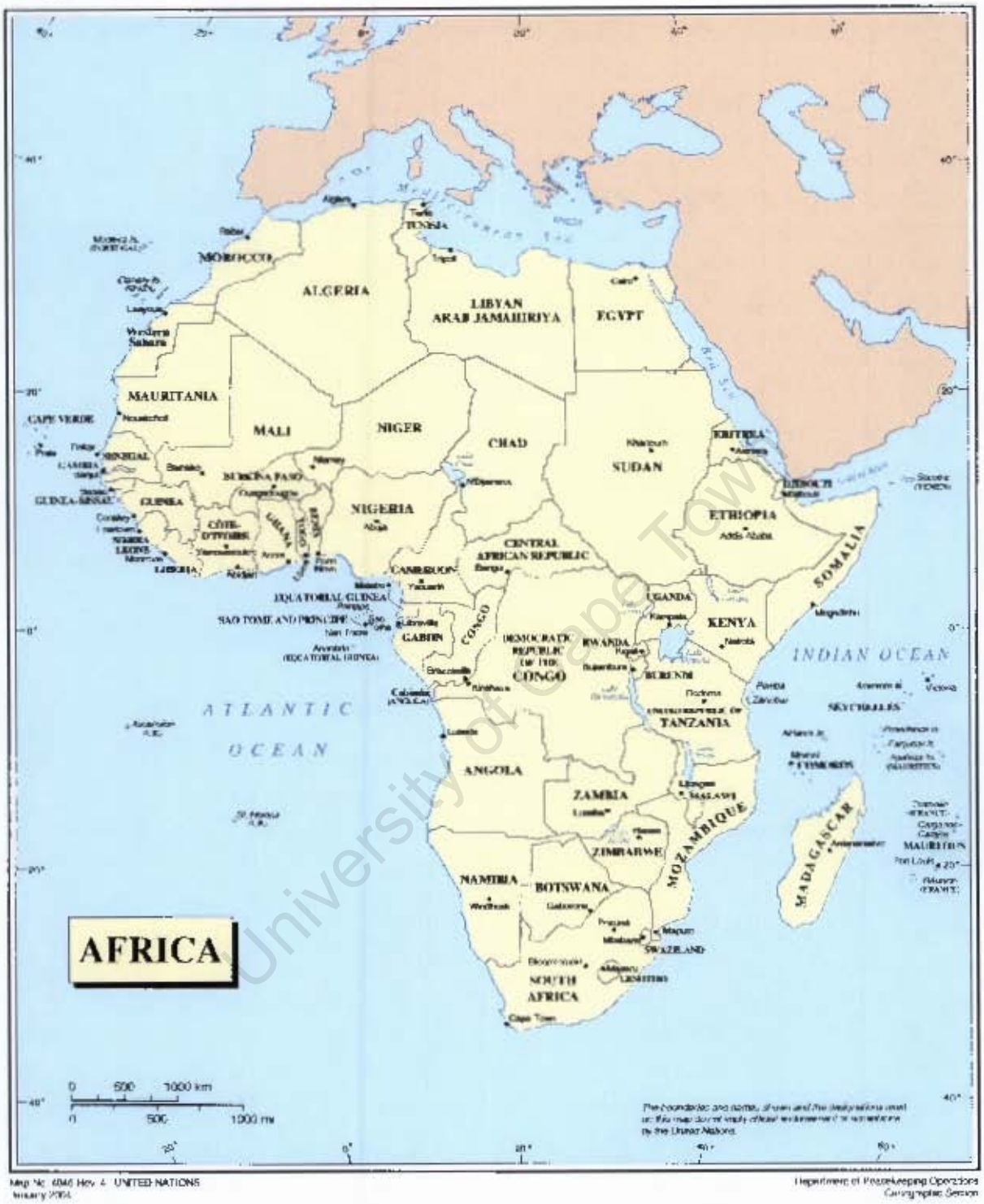
(iii) Last Word...

Learning and keeping COIN is indeed like eating soup with a knife. It is difficult and dependent on very particular conditions. Yet with insurgency abounding in every direction, in one form or another, and PSOs in insurgent conflicts on the rise, the relevance of COIN for contemporary and future conflict is undeniable. If a military has been fortunate enough to be able learn COIN in the past when the stars aligned for a brief time to provide the very specific circumstances in which to do so, a military must make every effort to keep that knowledge.

Yet the keeping is seemingly more so difficult when, like South Africa, there is a history of human rights abuses during the learning, where the learning is done in part domestically, and where that learning is widely considered illegitimate. In such a case, there can be no withdrawal from some faraway place. The experience cannot be erased as having been some extraordinary encounter. Reminders of the past are all

around and few can forget the role of the military in that past. However, there is an ever pressing need to meet the demands of the present, and for that, the SANDF needs its COIN past whether it or anyone else likes it or not. Having been able to learn COIN, to have that knowledge and ability, South Africa has a responsibility to use it to bring greater peace and stability to the continent. After all, the history of a military is fluid, and no past, however bleak, can be neatly placed into a box and shelved. Instead, it needs to be integrated into a living body of knowledge of what it has learned and experienced, a body which can be drawn on when required, when faced with something it has most definitely seen before. Until then, success as a military force effective in enhancing defensive capabilities and bringing peace, security and stability to Africa will continue to prove illusive.

Appendix A – Africa Map



Map No. 6046 Rev. 4 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

Appendix B – *DRC Peacekeeping* (courtesy of *Zapiro*)

The complex nature of both the conflict in the DRC, as well as other warlord insurgencies, is well illustrated in *Zapiro*'s "DRC Peacekeeping" cartoon, 5 May 2000, *Mail and Guardian*. Specifically, it aptly highlights both the plethora of indistinguishable participants, and the subsequent difficulties this kind of conflict poses for peace soldiers.

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